

The Understudy

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1 INT. 15TH CENTURY FOREST - NIGHT

An ancient SNOW GLOBE sits alone on the forest floor, holding two dance figurines. The clearing is adorned with jagged tombstones and a small village can be seen through the trees.

A hand SNATCHES the globe. It belongs to CONSTANTINE, 40s, being chased by an ARMY OF SKELETONS with glowing green eyes.

Skeletons lunge from darkness. Constantine knocks out two round of skeletons with his foot while executing ballet turns in second. He slides on his knees presenting the globe to...

A wide-eyed BALLERINA. She takes the globe and whispers-

BALLERINA
(in Romanian)
I wish I was alone.

Constantine now has skeletons piling on top of him, burying him. The globe illuminates green and all skeletons drop lifeless. Constantine slowly climbs out of the bony mound.

Ballerina takes Constantine's hand and both turn to face...

A MODERN DAY AUDIENCE erupting in applause, tossing bouquets of roses on to the stage. A skeletal hand twitches.

FOUR YEAR OLD FRITZ rushes on the stage from the audience with a wooden sword, bludgeoning the lifeless hunk of bones.

2 FADE IN WHITE

As OPENING CREDITS begin, we're bombarded with photo after photo, video clip after video clip of NATALIE PRIMAVERA's, 17, Instagram page. Natalie is ballet perfection executing difficult poses with an omnipresent smile.

With 985,000 followers we see her profile picture and name: Natalie Primavera. Wilburn Arts HS Senior. Future Principle Ballerina at Royal Ballet. Coffee Obsessed.

Photos of Natalie at school, hair down in "casual clothes." Posing with her two equally beautiful best friends: JASMINE, 17 and ZOE, 18, alongside designer cupcakes and mochas.

A photo of Natalie's Mom as a younger dancer with the caption: "My Mama. This woman is my inspiration."

Natalie poses in front of poster for Nutcracker auditions in her dance attire. Caption reads: SUGAR PLUM FAIRY HERE I COME! Can I get 1 million followers for good luck?

3 EXT. WILBURN ARTS HS - DAY

Dark clouds roll in with strong winds as a pastel car pulls into a spot. License plate reads, "BAI1ET." In the car, Natalie sits for a moment on her phone, she sees her last Instagram post and the hearts growing.

A text message comes in-

MOM (TEXT)
Have a wonderful audition. Can't wait to see my Sugar Plum Fairy!

NATALIE (TEXT)
<3 You.

Natalie pops in earbuds and presses play on Tchaikovsky's "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy", takes a deep breath and exits the car.

Natalie jogs up the front steps and past the front doors with a taped "NUTCRACKER AUDITIONS" poster flapping in the wind.

4 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY/REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Natalie walks down an empty hallway and turns on pointe of her sneakers to a hallway FULL OF DANCERS, stretching and on their phones in various groups.

All turn to look at Natalie, including her dance-instagram-model friends at the end of the hallway: JASMINE KEARN and twins, ZOE and BROCK DENNINGS waving her over.

Natalie makes her way down the hall when the double doors of the dance studio swings open to reveal-

MR. CONSTANTINE, mid-40s, the same Romanian man seen fighting off skeletons, but now a bit older and weathered with a full beard. Thunder claps. Lights flicker on and off.

Natalie stops in her tracks and the two look at one another.

The door shuts with a sign, "AUDITIONS" posted on the door.

Natalie peels back the sign to investigate through the window, but a messy pony tail obscures her view...

It's AVA ROSS, 17, a meek girl in schlubby clothes, pushing a large broom. The two girls suddenly face-to-face, reel back from each other. Ava laughs nervously.

AVA
What a day for an audition, huh?
The rain makes me so tired.

NATALIE
An artist does not fold her hands
on the pretext that she is not in
the mood. Tchaikovsky said that.

Natalie turns away from the door. Ava's smile and head drops.

5 INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

AUDITIONERS in pointe shoes and dance attire are seated in cliques as Mr. Constantine and MISS MIYAKO and MISS LANA, 40s-60s Ballet Mistresses, stand at the front of the studio.

Natalie and friends are stretching in slow motion, legs pulled over their heads and perfectly lit as though they're in a dance ad.

Zoe kisses her phone.

NATALIE
Did you just kiss your phone?

ZOE
I kissed Ansel. I kiss him three times and my wishes come true. I just wished to be Clara.

Zoe flashes her lock screen: a picture of Ansel Elgort.

NATALIE
You can't wish your way into a role, you know better than that.

BROCK
What else are you auditioning for?

NATALIE
Just the Sugar Plum Fairy.

JASMINE
Is your bun too tight? What if you don't get it?

NATALIE
Of course I'll get it. I get the role, one million followers, and I'm on Royal Ballet's radar.

Ava sits with KENZIE, 17, on the gloomy side of the studio, their eyes fixed on Natalie and her friends.

AVA

Why am I even auditioning? Look at her, she's like a Bolshoi sleeper agent.

KENZIE

Forget her. This is for fun.

Miss Lana eagerly approaches the center of the studio.

MISS LANA

Dancers! I'm so excited to introduce Mr. Constantine here from the Romanian Ballet. We're really lucky to have such an accomplished dancer to direct this season's Nutcracker, not to mention distractingly handsome- and married, yes, I know- while Mrs. Brewer is on maternity leave-

MR. CONSTANTINE

Enough.

(to Dancers)

What enters your mind when you think of the Nutcracker?

ZOE

(hand up)

Christmas.

MR. CONSTANTINE

Yes. Winter.

Natalie exchanges glances with her friends.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

Anyone else?

Silence.

Mr. Constantine holds up the ancient Snow Globe containing two dark figures in a frosted forest. He cranks the knob, playing a tinny Pas de Deux from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
The Nutcracker. A Christmas ballet
over a hundred years old, danced by
by thousands of dancers, millions
of times, music reaching billions
of ears. There is magic in this.
Real magic. Is there magic in you?

Mr. Constantine gingerly places the snow globe on the piano.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
Let's begin our auditions.

The front door OPENS and all dancers turn in unison to look
at GRAYSON, 18, a charming shaggy haired Senior. Grayson
halts as ALL THE FACES ARE STARING AT HIM.

GRAYSON
Oh, great. I was nervous about
auditioning at a new school, but
now I see you're all super-chill.

Natalie laughs.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Prince Cavaliers and Sugar Plum
Fairies stay. Everyone else, wait
out in the hall.

Dancers filter out as Natalie looks around and sees
AUDITIONER #1 staying put. Natalie shoots her a LOOK-
Auditioner #1 abruptly gets up and leave.

Natalie notices Jasmine lingering and raises her eyebrows.
Jasmine catches Natalie's look.

JASMINE
Oh. ONLY Sugar Plum Fairies stay.

Jasmine laughs nervously and exits quickly.

Most dancers have left the studio with Natalie, Brock,
Grayson, and Ava left. Natalie does a double take at Ava and
laughs quietly to herself.

MR. CONSTANTINE
We audition with the Pas de Deux.
The heart of these roles-

NATALIE
(hand up)
The solo has always been the
audition for the Sugar Plum Fairy.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Do you know the Pas de Deux?

NATALIE
Yes. But I've been working-

MR. CONSTANTINE
(to Ava)
Do you know it?

Ava nods.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
The Pas de Deux! In the other world
beyond Clara's household while
everyone sleeps. Ignorant.

GRAYSON
Ignorant of what?

MR. CONSTANTINE
The other world.

Thunder booms. The lights flicker on and off. Miss Miyako and Miss Lana look up at the ceiling.

MISS MIYAKO
(to Mr Constantine)
What are you doing?

MR. CONSTANTINE
Setting the scene.
(looking at paper)
Let's start with Natalie Primavera
and Brock Dennings.

Natalie pulls on her rehearsal tutu as she walks to her spot on the dance floor with Brock. The PIANIST starts the music.

Natalie and Brock execute the dance with skillful ease. Natalie's turns are in triples, her extensions reach her ear, and with the final lift and drop, Natalie flashes a large smile. Miss Miyako and Miss Lana mouth, "Wow."

Natalie's smile drops as Mr. Constantine shakes his head.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
Miss Primavera, what were you
thinking while you were dancing?

NATALIE
Well, I was counting, obviously.
And made sure I stayed lifted and
opened to the audience-

MR. CONSTANTINE

Enough!
(beat)
Next two.

Ava, in a wrinkled wrap skirt, hurry to the floor with Grayson while Natalie sulkily sits with a frown.

The Pianist begins. Ava and Grayson dance. Ava's leaps are low, her turns are in singles, and her extensions barely make it past her hip, but there's a clear sadness behind her eyes and her body moves with the music.

Miss Lana, Miss Miyako, and Mr. Constantine watch, attentively nodding. Mr. Constantine smiles large as the dancers finish.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

Okay. Goodbye dancers.

Natalie's eyes dart around.

NATALIE

Wait, aren't you going to ask her what she was thinking?

MR. CONSTANTINE

I don't have to.

Ava's eyes widen- Does she have a chance?

MISS MIYAKO

Thank you! You'll hear the audition results tonight by email.

Ava, Grayson, and Brock head out the door.

Miss Lana, Miss Miyako, and Mr. Constantine rummage through papers together. The Pianist COUGHS and eyes the center of the room where Natalie is planted. Arms crossed.

MISS MIYAKO (CONT'D)

(under her breath)

Here we go.

NATALIE

Are you playing some kind of mind game with me, Mr. Constantine? You know she's only been dancing for five years? She just got en pointe.

MISS LANA

She probably shouldn't be en pointe-

MR. CONSTANTINE
Your technique is excellent. You
don't need to put her down to show
how good you are.

NATALIE
That's not what I'm doing!
(takes a deep breath)
Look, I'm a senior and I've played
every role in the Nutcracker except
the Sugar Plum Fairy. I know every
note of that song. I've come from
four generations of ballerinas. I
was literally born to do this.

MR. CONSTANTINE
The song is about sadness.

NATALIE
It's a happy ballet! It's about
Christmas! Christmas makes people
feel happy.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Christmas makes me feel like
darkness.

The lights flicker.

MISS MIYAKO
That's creepy. It's like I'm
teaching in public school again.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Play the piece!

The Pianist obediently begins playing the Pas De Deux.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
Listen. From the other world.

NATALIE
The sweet world.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Memory is not sweet, it's
nostalgic, gone forever. Don't
think about choreography,
Instagram, or Chris Hemsworth. Find
purpose in it.

NATALIE
Dance is purpose for me-

MR. CONSTANTINE
Listen!

Natalie closes her eyes. The music seems to grow louder and Natalie's shoulders relax, her head swaying with the notes. Mr. Constantine smiles.

MISS MIYAKO
There's two hundred dancers waiting
to audition, Mr. Constantine.

Natalie snaps out of it and charges out the door with a huff.

6 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Natalie closes her dance bag with a furious ZIP. Jasmine and Zoe stand around her with nervous excitement.

JASMINE
That was perfect! Beautiful!

ZOE
Totes. Ava Ross is a corps dancer
at best. I mean, I've seen bigger
shoes on clowns.

Miss Miyako pops her head out of the door.

MISS MIYAKO
Snow Queens next.
(to Jasmine)
I'm surprised I didn't see you in
there with the Sugar Plum Fairies.

Jasmine eyes Natalie nervously.

JASMINE
That role is Natalie's.

NATALIE
We'll see.

Jasmine walks in confidently with a group of NERVOUS DANCERS.

Natalie walks down the hall, bag slung over her shoulder.

AVA
Great job in there.

NATALIE
Like you'd know.

Ava watches Natalie walk off, shaking her head.

7 EXT. PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - SUNSET

Natalie is on her phone swiping down to refresh her email.

Jasmine, Zoe, and Brock are a few feet away drinking Frappuccinos and taking photos of various dance poses.

MOM (TEXT)
How'd it go?! Answer your phone!!

Natalie clicks over to Ava's Instagram page and pauses on a photo of Ava and Kenzie making goofy faces. Natalie turns her camera on selfie mode and takes a goofy face pic.

GRAYSON (O.S.)
Cute selfie.

Natalie quickly hides the pic and swings around to see Grayson standing behind her.

NATALIE
What are you doing here?

JASMINE
We invited him! Get off your phone, Nat! You're getting the part!

8 INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - EVENING

Mr. Constantine, Miss Miyako, and Miss Lana sit in the middle of the floor with audition paperwork laid out everywhere.

Ava timidly walks into the room interrupting the teachers.

AVA
Uh- Mr. Constantine? I did a lot of work-study hours for Mrs. Brewer and I was wondering if you had anything for me?

MISS MIYAKO
Ava, we can't really let you in on this end of the process.

AVA
Oh. Of course. Sorry.

Ava starts to turn away.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Miss Ross, I could use your help with something.

9 INT. MR. CONSTANTINE'S OFFICE - EVENING

Ava opens a box in an dusky office stacked with boxes.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Books go on the bookshelf. You can
leave everything else alone.

Ava notices the SNOW GLOBE on Mr. Constantine's desk. She picks it up, running her finger over the inscription on the base that reads "Dare to Wish, Feel Magic's Kiss."

AVA
Whoa.

MR. CONSTANTINE
That is to be left alone.

Ava sets it down with a nervous laugh.

Mr. Constantine turns to leave-

AVA
Do I actually have a chance at
getting the part?

MR. CONSTANTINE
You have the same chance as Miss
Primavera.

AVA
But... it's Natalie Primavera.

MR. CONSTANTINE
She's just a girl, Miss Ross. Just
like you.

10 EXT. PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - NIGHT

Natalie refreshes her email again.

BROCK
You ever heard a watched pot never
boils?

NATALIE
You ever been kicked in the balls
by a ballerina?

JASMINE
(on her phone)
Oh my God, it's in! It's in!

On Natalie's phone an email pops up from WILBURN HS DANCE DEPT with the subject line "NUTCRACKER AUDITION RESULTS"

11 INT. MR. CONSTANTINE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Ava is slotting books onto the bookshelf when her phone buzzes. She looks, it reads, "NUTCRACKER AUDITION RESULTS"

Ava sits down with a deep breath. She presses the link.

12 EXT. PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - NIGHT

"ROLE: SUGAR PLUM FAIRY"

Natalie beams, flashing her phone to her friends.

13 INT. MR. CONSTANTINE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Ava slams her phone down in disappointment. Her email opened to "ROLE: UNDERSTUDY TO SUGAR PLUM FAIRY"

Ava wipes away a tear.

14 EXT. PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - NIGHT

Natalie's phone: VIDEO LIVE STREAM with Natalie, Zoe, Brock, and Jasmine. Grayson filming.

NATALIE

Hey guys! Natalie Primavera here!
My best friends and I were just
enjoying our last summer night out
before Senior year starts-

ZOE

And voila! We got our audition
results for our final Nutcracker!

15 INT. MR. CONSTANTINE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Ava is watching Natalie's live stream as Mr. Constantine walks in. She quickly sets her phone down.

MR. CONSTANTINE

We're heading home. If you need a
moment. You can lock up behind
yourself.

(beat)

You danced well, Miss Ross.

AVA
Not good enough.

MR. CONSTANTINE
An understudy is an invaluable
position and only given to someone
we can trust with the role.

AVA
I just really wanted that role.

MR. CONSTANTINE
So did Miss Primavera.

AVA
But Natalie always gets the role.
She gets everything. I just want to
know what it's like to... Never
mind. It's stupid.

MR. CONSTANTINE
To what? To be Miss Primavera?
(beat)
It's possible that Miss Primavera
wishes she could be you sometimes?

Ava shakes her head with a snort, wiping away tears.

A faint green light seems to twinkle from inside the Snow
Globe's sitting on Mr. Constantine's desk. He notices.

AVA
I'll get over it. I'm just tired.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Get some rest. See you at rehearsal
tomorrow, Miss Ross.

Mr. Constantine exits.

Ava picks up the snow globe and cranks music knob. The Pas De
Deux variation plays from the globe.

On Ava's phone Natalie's live stream plays in the background:

JASMINE
And you're looking at the Snow
Queen! Yep. Two years in a row!

ZOE
And I'm Clara! I couldn't have done
it without my bae, Ansel Elgort!

NATALIE
And Brock here is the Russian
Soloist! And I'm the Sugar Plum
Fairy! I can't wait to share this
journey with all of you from now
until Opening Night! Here's to one
million followers before first
rehearsal tomorrow!
(winks)
Royal Ballet, I'm looking at you!

16 EXT. PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - NIGHT

Natalie is in a Penche Arabesque pose. The full moon behind her, making her a beautiful silhouette. Brock snaps a photo. Natalie lets go of the pose and grabs the phone.

NATALIE
(holds up phone)
What do you think of this?

JASMINE
Love it. Your lines are really
clean and-

NATALIE
No, but what do you *feel*? Does it,
like, move you?

Silence.

Natalie steps back and examines the scene.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I got it.

Natalie climbs on top of the cement railing of the overpass.

GRAYSON
Whoa! Hey! Is that safe?!

NATALIE
It's perfectly safe if you have
perfect technique. Almost a million
people are going to see this photo
and I want them to feel something.

GRAYSON
Worried?

NATALIE
No. *Magic*.

Natalie stretches into the pose again and her foot wobbles slightly underneath her.

17 INT. MR. CONSTANTINE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The snow globe glows bright green.

Ava's is on Natalie's Instagram page, scrolling past smile after smile, role after role.

Ava looks from her phone to the snow globe. The inscription, "Dare to Wish, Feel Magic's Kiss" seems to glisten. She grabs and shakes the globe so the snow within swirls.

18 EXT. PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - NIGHT

Natalie is mid-pose.

BROCK
Got it! Perfect!

Natalie's foot SLIPS and she FALLS over the edge. Shouts and screams come from her friends-

19 INT. MR. CONSTANTINE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Ava shuts her eyes and takes a deep breath.

AVA
I wish I was Natalie Primavera.

The Snow Globe ENGULFS in black fog in a flash and a green blinding glow illuminates the entire office.

Ava gasps as her "spirit," a translucent essence of her, puffs off her body.

20 EXT. PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - NIGHT

Natalie is falling in slow motion, screaming as Ava's "spirit" ZOOMS toward her from the night sky.

The ground approaches closer and closer. Natalie squeezes her eyes as her "spirit" exits her body just as Ava's enters it.

BLACK OUT upon hitting the ground.

21 INT. MR. CONSTANTINE'S OFFICE - DAY

POV shot. Blurry at first. Sunlight through the window. The snow globe on its side with the inscription "Dare to Wish, Feel Magic's Kiss" coming into focus.

NATALIE (V.O.)
What the...?

Ava's sleepy face lifts up as she spots her phone and grabs it. It opens up to Natalie's Instagram page: the shot of her doing a Penche Arabesque on the bridge. A phenomenal picture.

Note: Ava's body is now inhabited by Natalie and vice versa. Henceforth, Ava and Natalie will be referred to as their "soul/brain" name rather than their "body" name.

Natalie stands, hand on her head and dazed. The door handle jiggles and Natalie tucks under Mr. Constantine's desk right before the door opens.

Mr. Constantine walks in, grabs a few pieces of paper, places the snow globe upright and exits. Natalie sighs with relief.

22 INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Natalie walks out of the office and into the rehearsal room, catching her reflection. Natalie HALTS, rushes back in front of the mirror: face to face with Ava's Body.

Natalie walks closer and closer to the mirror, mouth agape as she touches her face, her hair, breathing heavier.

MR. CONSTANTINE (O.S.)
Is everything okay, Miss Ross?

Mr. Constantine is at the corner of the room.

NATALIE
Miss Ross? This is impossible.

Natalie looks back at the mirror.

MR. CONSTANTINE
It may seem impossible to fill Miss Primavera's shoes, but due to her-accident- I think you'll find it in you to do justice to the dance.

NATALIE
... Accident?

The bell rings. The hallway floods with students and Natalie turns back but Mr. Constantine has vanished.

23

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Natalie stumbles into the hallway filled with STUDENTS of all different art disciplines- DRAMA, ART, MUSIC, DANCE. "Back to School" artwork decorates the hallway.

Natalie spots Zoe, Brock, and Jasmine walking together.

NATALIE
Jasmine! Zoe! Brock!

They look, turn a cold shoulder and continue walking. Natalie runs to catch up to them, reaching for Zoe.

ZOE
Do you mind?!

NATALIE
I need your help. I'm seriously
freaking out here.

Jasmine flashes Natalie a sympathetic smile.

JASMINE
I understand. I would be panicking
too if I were in your shoes-

Natalie throws her arms around Jasmine in a tight hug.
Jasmine flashes Zoe and Brock a "wtf" look.

NATALIE
Listen, I'm Natalie but in-

JASMINE
I know. We're gonna fix it. Let's
go to Mr. Constantine and let him
know that we're switching roles.
Like you said, you're not Natalie
and nobody expected what happened
to Natalie to happen.

BROCK
I mean, I kind of did.

NATALIE
No. That's not what I said, I said-
Wait, what happened?!

ZOE

Don't play. Everyone knows what happened to Natalie.

Jasmine takes a step toward Natalie.

JASMINE

(whispers)

You're balance challenged and as flexible as a petrified fossil. The Sugar Plum Fairy should go to someone actually capable of dancing the role.

NATALIE

This is definitely a nightmare-

Natalie stumbles back away from her friends and into-

TREVOR, 17, a gaunt undeniably nerdy kid with a viola case. He plants a kiss on Natalie's lips. Natalie slaps him- HARD.

TREVOR

Ow! Sorry! I don't know how to congratulate you when it's because of something so terrible.

Natalie's breathing becomes irregular. An EXIT sign illuminates down the hall. She makes a beeline for it.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Cool cool! We'll talk later!

Kenzie pops in front of Natalie.

KENZIE

Ava?! Are you okay? I just heard the news. It's really horrible-

NATALIE

What news! Why won't anyone say it!

An overhead screen starts playing the abrasive song for morning announcements and we see PRINCIPAL WATERS, 50s.

PRINCIPAL WATERS

Welcome back all returning and new students. I regret to start our very first morning announcement with some unfortunate news to share this morning about our very own Natalie Primavera.

(MORE)

PRINCIPAL WATERS (CONT'D)
The Wilburn Arts Senior fell
fifteen feet last night and is
currently at St. John's hospital.

NATALIE
I'm not dead.

KENZIE
I know you're under a lot of
pressure, but you can do this.
You're Jodie from Center Stage,
rising up from quiet underdog.

Kenzie pulls out her phone.

KENZIE (CONT'D)
This is a great photo though.

Kenzie holds up her phone showing the moon photo on Natalie's
Instagram page.

NATALIE
Thank you.

Kenzie looks at her- confused.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I gotta go-

KENZIE
What about Chemistry?!

Natalie rushes out of the hallway and into-

24 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Natalie walks hastily and makes a turn-

The sign INTENSIVE CARE UNIT looms overhead and she stops
before the locked double doors.

An ELDERLY COUPLE exits and Natalie slips through.

25 INT. ICU NURSE STATION/ICU ROOM 202 - DAY

The chart in the door says "Primavera, Natalie". The curtain
is drawn in the room, but Natalie can see a leg in a cast.

Natalie reaches to pull back the curtain when NURSE SANDY,
30s, pops in front of her.

NURSE SANDY
Family only. Step out please.

Natalie backs out of the room, blocked by Nurse Sandy.

MR. PRIMAVERA, 50s, walks up in a wrinkled suit, blood shot eyes, carrying a small coffee cup and spots Natalie.

NATALIE
Dad! Uh, Natalie's Dad. I need to talk to Natalie.

MR. PRIMAVERA
She's not awake.

NATALIE
Is she going to be okay?

MR. PRIMAVERA
(hesitates)
Yeah.

NATALIE
Awesome. Wait, are you drinking vending machine coffee?

MR. PRIMAVERA
Guilty. Don't come closer. My breath will knock you out.

NATALIE
There's a Coffee Lovers down the block. I'll go get you one.

Mr. Primavera studies Natalie.

MR. PRIMAVERA
You're one of Natalie's friends?

NATALIE
It's really important that I talk to her. Trust me.

MR. PRIMAVERA
Okay. We'll be ready for visitors in a few days. We just want things to settle a bit first.

NATALIE
Oh. Okay. Sure. I'll be back.

Mr. Primavera raises his coffee cup as a "Bye" and exits into the room. Natalie follows Nurse Sandy to the Nurses' Station.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
How long is that cast going to be
on her leg for?

NURSE SANDY
I can't answer any of your
questions. It's called HIPAA.

NATALIE
How long does it take for a broken
leg to heal then? Like generally?

NURSE SANDY
Six weeks.

NATALIE
Have you noticed anything weird
with her? Like with her brain or
something? Hypothetically, if the
spirit of Natalie is in someone
else then logically, that someone
else's spirit is in Natalie, right?

NURSE SANDY
Well, HIPAA-thetically, we think in
terms of medicine here, like-
facts. What you're talking about is
more like magic. Like bullshit.

26 INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Natalie pats her jeans and pulls out a work-study form signed by Mr. Constantine and Ava's phone. The screen has a crack and a picture of Ava with Trevor kissing her cheek.

NATALIE
Gross.

Natalie goes to Ava's Instagram page: 86 followers. She clicks on a pic of Ava and Kenzie captioned: "AUDITION DAY!"

Natalie goes to her own Instagram page and sees that she now has 1.6 million followers.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Oh my God.

Natalie clicks on the Moon photo and scrolls through comment after comment of well wishes. One comment makes her pause:

ROYAL BALLET: Fast recovery, Natalie. We look forward to your audition!

Natalie's eyes widen and she presses the phone against her heart like a love letter. She sees her reflection in the elevator doors- Ava's face staring back at her.

27 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Natalie rushes down the hall to Ava's locker and opens it up with a key. The locker displays photos of Ava and Trevor and neatly lined books.

Natalie dumps books and papers out of the locker onto the floor, searching desperately.

MISS MIYAKO (O.S.)
Miss Ross, did you lose something?

Miss Miyako quickly shoves the books back into the locker.

NATALIE
My body.

MISS MIYAKO
Well, you're not going to find your Junior Year body in there. You're late for rehearsal.
(shuts locker)
This is a really bad first impression you're making.

NATALIE
I'm kind of going through a life crisis here!

Miss Miyako grabs Natalie's wrist and tugs her down the hall.

MISS MIYAKO
Deal with your life crisis after rehearsal. I vouched for you. Don't make me regret that.

NATALIE
You vouched for Ava?

MISS MIYAKO
Don't make regret it.

28 INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Natalie enters the studio, already FULL OF DANCERS lining the wall: stretching, taking selfies, putting on pointe shoes.

In the middle of the studio, Zoe dances the Clara solo with Kenzie dancing simultaneously in the back- a place designated for the understudy.

FRITZ, a nine year old Romanian boy grabs the imaginary doll from Zoe and smashes it to the ground. Zoe and Kenzie put on their best "surprise" faces.

FRITZ
Awful! Father, we need do it again?

MR. CONSTANTINE
Fritz, be nice.

ZOE
He's your son? And his name is
Fritz?

MR. CONSTANTINE
I have many children, but this is
the one I prefer most. Places!

Fritz joins the other PARTY CHILDREN, but they all move away from him. He takes one step closer and they take a step away.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
Don't mind them, Fritz. They will
all be dead one day.

The Children look at him dumbfounded.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
My apologies, I meant to say that
in Romanian. One more time!

BEAN ROSS, an eight year old girl hits Natalie on the arm.

BEAN
(to Natalie)
Were you at Trevor's last night?
Mom is pissed and you're so
grounded!

Natalie dodges Bean. Bean crosses her arms, shaking her head.

MISS MIYAKO
(snapping fingers)
You have ten minutes, Miss Ross.

Natalie spots her former friends: Jasmine, Zoe, and Brock and starts to head toward them when-

KENZIE
Ava! Hey! Over here!

Kenzie enthusiastically waves standing in the corner with THEO, 18, slightly portly male dancer wearing a rainbow bandana. Natalie reluctantly makes her way over.

NATALIE

Hey Kenzie and- Theo, right? Uh,
were we up to something last night?

KENZIE

I thought you were doing work-study
last night?

Miss Miyako tosses her hands up to say, "What's the hold up?"

NATALIE

I gotta get dressed.

29 INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Natalie is dressed in Ava's dance clothes, her tights have runs and her wrap skirt is a wrinkled mess. Natalie pulls out Ava's pointe shoes, they look disgusting.

30 INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

The Pianist is playing the Pas de Deux as Natalie and Grayson dance. After the second rotation in Natalie's pirouette, her ankle wobbles and she stumbles out of the turn-

MR. CONSTANTINE

Keep going.

Grayson and Natalie continue. Natalie struggles with every extension, lift, and turn. Finally her ankle gives out again and she lands flat on her bottom.

Dancers sitting along the wall giggle.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

You danced this beautifully at the
audition yesterday.

NATALIE

Sure, if having a weak core and no
flexibility is beautiful. And who
approved pointe shoes for this
body? Not to mention these shoes
are dead.

MISS LANA
(to Miss Miyako)
Somebody learned to be a diva
pretty fast.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Can I see you in my office please?

31 INT. MR. CONSTANTINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Natalie follows Mr. Constantine into the office and leans against his desk with the snow globe sitting on the edge.

MR. CONSTANTINE
I know you're upset, but sometimes crazy things happen for a reason.

NATALIE
...Why would you say that? Are you talking about the show or do you know what's going on with me?

MR. CONSTANTINE
Of course. Last night you were sitting there wishing you could be Natalie Primavera and here you are.

NATALIE
Here who is?

MR. CONSTANTINE
The Sugar Plum Fairy.
(beat)
Ava.

Mr. Constantine winks.

NATALIE
That's it! I need to find some crystals to touch or a well to throw some cash in cause apparently all the creepy Transylvanian Artistic Director is good for is a bunch of B.S. mysteriousness!

Natalie throws her hands in the air swiping the Snow Globe-making it FLY. Mr. Constantine DIVES for it and catches it before it can hit the ground.

MR. CONSTANTINE
You have to be more careful, Miss Primavera!

NATALIE
I knew it!

MR. CONSTANTINE
I wasn't being subtle.

NATALIE
Is this Ava's fault? Is she the
reason I'm here? Fix it! Fix it
right now!

MR. CONSTANTINE
It takes two to pas de deux. Ava's
wish brought you here, your wish
can bring you back.

Mr. Constantine sets the Snow Globe back on the desk and turns to go.

NATALIE
Wait! That's it? Don't we need to
do it at the same time or there's
some kind of cosmic lesson first?

MR. CONSTANTINE
You teenagers watch too many
movies.

Natalie picks up the Snow Globe.

NATALIE
(reading)
Dare to Wish, Feel Magic's Kiss.

Mr. Constantine exits, leaving his office door ajar. Natalie shakes the globe and it glows green.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I wish-

Suddenly Natalie hears commotion coming from the studio and sees through the open door- MRS. PRIMAVERA, 50s.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Mom?

32 INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Primavera looks as though she's been crying, but has a smile on her face. Everyone huddles around her and Jasmine gives her a large hug.

MRS. PRIMAVERA
 I just wanted to pop in and give
 you all the update on Natalie.
 (takes in a deep breath)
 She hasn't woken up yet, but she's
 going to be okay.

Dancers exhale with relief. Jasmine and Zoe hug each other. Natalie steps out into the studio.

MRS. PRIMAVERA (CONT'D)
 The specialist told us that she
 suffered no brain damage, but she
 shattered her right hip and has a
 mild spinal injury. And-
 (swallows)
 She won't be able to dance again.

Natalie's face falls. The green glow fizzles from the Snow Globe. Mrs. Primavera continues talking, but it's muffled. Everything around Natalie turns white.

Natalie snaps out of it: sight and sound are back to normal. Dancers murmuring and comforting Mrs. Primavera.

Natalie looks at the Snow Globe in her hand and races out of the Studio, unnoticed by all but Mr. Constantine.

33 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Constantine exits the studio. He follows Natalie storming down the hall with the Snow Globe in her hand-

NATALIE
 I wish my body was healed and I was
 back in it. And obviously get into
 the Royal Ballet.

Mr. Constantine watches as the snow globe remains lifeless.

MR. CONSTANTINE
 How can you exhale twice?

Natalie notices Mr. Constantine behind her.

NATALIE
 What?

MR. CONSTANTINE
 The magic has been engaged. It has
 been done and can only be undone.

Natalie stares at the globe with dismay.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
(warning)
Miss Primavera-

NATALIE
Just- just let me think for a
second, okay?
(deep breath)
Ava's gonna have to dance this role
and like it or not, I'm the best
shot she's got at getting her body
in shape. You said it. Everything
happens for a reason.

MR. CONSTANTINE
There are consequences in staying
too long. The magic grows weaker
and you won't be able to go back-

NATALIE
When can't I switch back anymore?

MR. CONSTANTINE
The next blue moon. December 15th.
Opening night.

The lights flicker on and off.

NATALIE
Okay. As soon as Ava wakes up, I'll
switch back.

MR. CONSTANTINE
... And if you never wake up.

NATALIE
... I'll switch on opening night.

MR. CONSTANTINE
You're playing with fire, Miss-

NATALIE
Mr. Constantine, I've survived high
school. I got this.

34 INT. ARTISTIC DANCEWEAR - DAY

A PILE OF POINTE SHOES, REHEARSAL TUTU, and DANCE ATTIRE
lands on the CASHIER's counter. Ava's phone lights up, "MOM
CALLING." Natalie swipes to ignore.

Natalie taps over to her own Instagram page.

CASHIER

Whoa. You get robbed or something?

NATALIE

Something like that.

CASHIER

(punching buttons)

That'll be... \$1,416.25.

NATALIE

Whoa. I guess it's the beginning of
the season, right?

CASHIER

Right.

Natalie rummages through Ava's bag and pulls a credit card out of her wallet, handing it to the Cashier with a smile.

36 EXT. PRIMAVERA MCMANSION - DAY

Natalie stands outside of her beautiful house, the Uber driving away, and her pastel car parked out in front.

Natalie turns the door knob, but doesn't push it open. Instead she carefully releases the knob and knocks.

A moment later, Mrs. Primavera answers the door, hair in a messy bun and a measuring tape in her hands.

MRS. PRIMAVERA

Can I help you?

NATALIE

Oh, I thought you'd be at the
hospital.

MRS. PRIMAVERA

Are you one of Natalie's friends?

NATALIE

Yes. I'm-

MRS. PRIMAVERA

The understudy.

(catches herself)

I mean, Ava. You're not the
understudy anymore.

(beat)

Come in. Come in.

37 INT. PRIMAVERA MCMANSION - DAY

A laberdoodle, CLICHE runs up to greet Natalie.

NATALIE

Hey Clich- uh, cutie!

Natalie kneels and lets the dog tackle and slobber all over her. Mrs. Primavera smiles.

MRS. PRIMAVERA

That's Cliche. She's usually pretty shy. Have you been here before?

NATALIE

Well, animals love me. I'm like Snow White.

MRS. PRIMAVERA

Natalie's like that, too.

(beat)

I'm sorry, my head's in a million places. Why are you here again?

NATALIE

Oh, uh- I wanted to decorate Natalie's hospital room with some of her things so she feels at home when she wakes up.

MRS. PRIMAVERA

(choked up)

WOW. That is so sweet. Are you two close?

Natalie swallows and nods.

38 INT. PRIMAVERA MCMANSION/NATALIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Natalie walks into her bedroom. It's like out of a magazine. King size bed in the middle of the room. Vanity mirror with a vast makeup collection displayed. A ballet barre installed with a large hanging mirror.

Natalie runs her hand over the barre, her makeup, and plops down on her bed.

Cliche jumps up on her lap to cuddle.

Natalie spots a framed photo collage titled "Nutcracker": A photo of young Natalie captioned: "Baby Mouse, Age 5" followed by portraits of her as all other Nutcracker roles with a single empty frame labeled "Sugar Plum Fairy."

Natalie pulls a duffel bag out of the closet, a royal ballet keychain hooked to the zipper, and collects a stuffed animal, a sweatshirt, a family photo.

Natalie opens a drawer and sees a packet labeled ROYAL BALLET AUDITION PACKET. Natalie shoves the packet into Ava's bag along with a few makeup pieces.

39 INT. MRS. PRIMAVERA'S OFFICE - DAY

Natalie creeps to the doorway and her mother is busy at her sewing machine putting together tutus.

NATALIE

You're costuming the show?

MRS. PRIMAVERA

I costume it every year.

NATALIE

Oh. I just thought this year would be different.

MRS. PRIMAVERA

It helps me feel normal.

Natalie watches her mom momentarily before leaving in a huff.

40 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

Natalie climbs out of an Uber looks at the apartment complex.

NATALIE

Hi, I'm Ava Ross. And I'm poor.

41 INT. AVA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Natalie enters cautiously.

NATALIE

Hello?

MS. ROSS, 50s, emerges, near running. She sees Natalie and gives her a large hug.

MS. ROSS

Where the hell have you been?

NATALIE

Uh- Did you hear I'm the Sugar Plum Fairy?

MS. ROSS

I know, what horrible news. I can't imagine what her mother is going through.

(sees the bags)

What's all this?

NATALIE

Just some stuff for the role.

MS. ROSS

Why didn't you call? Is your phone working? Are you and Trevor fighting? I know I said I was okay with you two having sex, but-

NATALIE

Ew! Stop!

(scrambling)

Yes, we had a fight and I'm super sad. Can we talk tomorrow?

Natalie rushes down the hall.

42

INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

There are two beds in the room. One with a cartoon character comforter and the other with a plain purple comforter.

Natalie sits on the bed with the purple comforter. A HARVARD UNIVERSITY flag hangs above the bed.

NATALIE (V.O.)

Pull yourself together, Natalie.

(fingers tapping)

Get in character. Who is Ava Ross?

Natalie pulls out Ava's phone and opens up Ava's Instagram page. It has about ten posts. One with Ava and Trevor licking ice cream from the same cone.

NATALIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Okay, I have horrible taste in guys. But I've had sex- surprising.

The Harvard flag catches her eye.

NATALIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I want to go to Harvard? Weird.

(looking around)

And I'm poor. And share a room with a little kid.

Natalie spots a PINK DIARY sitting on the floor.

NATALIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Of course! All losers have diaries!

Natalie picks up the diary and begins reading. It's in kid handwriting: Found condom wrapper in Ava's Drawer. Mom texted Dad yesterday, "We need to talk."

BEAN (O.S.)
What are you doing?!

Natalie looks up to see Bean standing at the door.

NATALIE
(recognizes)
You. Baby mouse, right?

BEAN
Yeah, so?! I didn't want to be a
party girl anyway!

Bean takes her pink diary back.

BEAN (CONT'D)
I'm going to find out what's up
with you. I always find out.

NATALIE
Okay, Nancy Drew. Get out.

Natalie shoves Bean out of the room and shuts the door. Bean bangs the other side of the door.

BEAN (O.S.)
MOM! Ava locked me out again!

Natalie looks at herself in the mirror- Ava's reflection and takes in a deep breath.

NATALIE
Let's get your ass in shape.

43 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Early morning and still dark out. Ava's phone alarms, off reading 5:00AM.

Natalie shuts off the alarm and jumps out of bed, walking past Ava's open backpack on the floor containing the snow globe. The globe sparks green with a sudden shake and jump before settling again.

44 EXT. STREET - SUNRISE

Natalie jogs as the sun rises.

Natalie snaps a photo of the sunrise.

She posts the photo on Ava's Instagram page with the caption:
"Early bird gets the worm. #Sugarplumfairy #Nutcracker"

45 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Bean wakes up and sees Natalie at her dresser doing ballet barre exercises. Bean points two fingers from her eyes to Natalie to say, "I'm watching you."

46 INT. AVA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Bean rattles the locked knob of the bathroom door.

BEAN

Please! I need to pee!

47 INT. AVA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Natalie puts her hair into a perfect high bun. She's applying the lipstick she stole from her room and takes a selfie with Ava's phone.

She posts the photo on Instagram with the caption:
"#TutuTuesday #Bunhead #Sugarplumfairy"

48 INT. AVA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Ms. Ross has breakfast ready: Fruit Loops cereal. Bean is chowing down and Natalie makes a face at the bowl.

NATALIE

Do we have any coffee?

MS. ROSS

When did you start drinking coffee?

BEAN

Caffeine is a drug you know.

NATALIE

Now. Figure I should start.

Ms. Ross walks to the counter to pour an extra cup of coffee. Bean pulls out a PILL container from Ms. Ross's purse and pushes it towards Natalie. Natalie snatches it and tosses it back into the purse.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Stop being weird!

BEAN
Interesting.

Bean jots in her diary as Ms. Ross hands Natalie a mug of coffee. Natalie takes a sip and makes a disgusted face.

MS. ROSS
With your AP classes, your work-study, and whatever is going on with Trevor, maybe we should talk about you switching roles-

NATALIE
What? No. I'm the Sugar Plum Fairy.

MS. ROSS
Ava, this is supposed to be for fun. You're not a ballerina.

NATALIE
WOW. I mean, I don't blame you for thinking it. We're all thinking it. Let's face it- this body sucks with shit training. But to say it out loud? To your own daughter? That's really cold.

Ms. Ross looks up and her chin starts to tremble.

MS. ROSS
I'm sorry, I didn't sleep. I just want to know what's going on. You skipped school, Ava.

Natalie watches Ms. Ross fight tears for a moment and sighs in defeat. Bean is jotting in her notebook with fury.

NATALIE
You really want to know what's going on?

MS. ROSS
Yes! You won't get in trouble. Just talk to me.

BEAN
Even after saying shit?

MS. ROSS
(to Bean)
Will you get dressed for school
please?

Bean frowns and stomps off.

BEAN (O.S.)
Being a kid is shit!

NATALIE
(deep breath)
I'm not your daughter. I'm Natalie
Primavera. Your daughter made some
wish on a magic gypsy snow globe
and now my body is in a coma. I
don't know if she's in there, but
I'm in her body now to help turn
Ava into a ballerina. So, I'm
basically saving the show.

Ms. Ross looks at her, wiping away the tears from her cheek.

MS. ROSS
Natalie Primavera?

NATALIE
(relieved)
Yes!

MS. ROSS
Not funny, Ava.

Ms. Ross leaves the table in a huff.

49 INT. CHEMISTRY CLASSROOM - DAY

Natalie and Grayson stand together at a lab table with
textbooks and 3d atom models. Kenzie in front of them.

Grayson peeks at Natalie's feet doing dégagés while she
scrolls through Ava's phone, reading comment after comment.

"You will never replace Natalie!"

"Too stupid looking for Tutus"

"#NotmySugarPlumFairy"

The chemistry teacher, MR. HALL, 40s, forgettable in appearance and a voice that could be mistaken for white noise. His sweater vest has a portrait of a cat.

MR. HALL
In order to calculate the value of the enthalpy change of the reaction, we'll use the balanced equation for the oxidation-reduction reaction...

Kenzie turns around.

KENZIE
Where were you yesterday?

NATALIE
I went to the hospital to see-

KENZIE
Ohmigod, Natalie Primavera?! How did she look? I don't think I've ever seen her without makeup on.

NATALIE
Super messed up.

KENZIE
Is it bad that that makes me happy in a small way? Also, horrible. But happy that she can look imperfect?

NATALIE
Uh, yes.

MR. HALL
Ava, do you have something you want to share with the whole class?

NATALIE
Oh, me? Uh- no thank you.

MR. HALL
Then would you like to explain to the class what a Happy Atom is?

NATALIE
One that doesn't take this class?

The class "Ooooos."

Mr. Hall's face scrunches up and tries to stifle himself from crying. Kenzie turns around.

KENZIE
What are you doing?!

NATALIE
Since when does *anyone* care about
Chemistry?

Kenzie and a FEW OTHER CLASSMATES go up to comfort Mr. Hall.
Natalie puts her face in her hands.

GRAYSON
Is he always this brittle?

NATALIE
Thank you! It's weird, right?

CHEMISTRY STUDENT
Catastrophe just died, jackhole.

GRAYSON
Who?

CHEMISTRY STUDENT
His cat!

NATALIE
(hand up)
Mr. Hall, can I go to the bathroom?

Mr. Hall is still crying. Natalie takes the pass and rushes out of the room.

50 INT. BATHROOM STALL - DAY

Natalie scrolls through her own (Natalie's) Instagram feed.
She scrolls past smiling picture after smiling picture.

Zoe and Jasmine enter. Natalie peers at them through the crack as Zoe puts in eyedrops and Jasmine has her phone out.
Natalie can't get a clear look at what's happening.

JASMINE
You're ridiculous.

ZOE
No. Watch. It's going to look
authentic. Okay. On the count of
three snap the photo. Ready? One,
Two, Three.

JASMINE
Okay, took it.

ZOE
Ooo, looks artsy. Do you think
Ansel will see it?

Ava's phone buzzes. Natalie looks at it. It's Zoe's Instagram page with the photo she just took: her face with one "tear" running down her cheek captioned: "Devastated about my bestie @NATALIEPRIMAVERA. Get better soon!"

NATALIE
(whisper)
You've got to be kidding.

ZOE (O.S.)
You're made to play the Sugar Plum
Fairy. You should have just gone
for it.

JASMINE (O.S.)
And deal with Natalie Prima Donna?
Not worth it.

Both girls burst out laughing as they exit.

NATALIE
(mouthing)
What?!

51 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Natalie rushes down the hallway- fuming. Trevor jogs carrying his viola case and catches up with her.

TREVOR
Aves! Avers! AVA!

Natalie walks even faster, dodging students.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Slow down there, Speed Racer!

Trevor jogs in front of Natalie and walks backwards-

TREVOR (CONT'D)
So, I was wondering if-

NATALIE
You need to stop following me.

TREVOR
Did I do something?

Natalie walks ahead.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Wait! Are we breaking up?

NATALIE
Let's just cool it, okay? Until
after opening night.

TREVOR
That's almost three months, Ava.

NATALIE
It'll be okay. Really. Just focus
on your violin there.

Trevor runs into a water fountain and falls. Kenzie at her locker, turns and sees this. Natalie keeps walking.

TREVOR
It's a viola.

52 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY/REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Natalie starts to push the studio door open but hears muffled sounds behind it. She peers through the window and sees Jasmine, Mr. Constantine, Miss Miyako, and Miss Lana all having a meeting.

MISS MIYAKO
Jasmine, if you wanted to play the Sugar Plum Fairy you should have auditioned.

JASMINE
And compete against my best friend? You know I couldn't do that. I'm an aspiring pro. Ava's a hobbyist. So, start me off as understudy. I mean, you can't risk the entire show by not having an understudy to the SPF, right?

The teachers contemplate silently.

53 INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Natalie gets dressed in her new dance attire, eyeing Jasmine and Zoe who are taking photos of each other while doing needle stretches.

Kenzie and Theo approach Natalie. SENIOR DANCER, 17, gasps upon seeing Theo.

SENIOR DANCER
Ew! Theo- get out of here!

KENZIE
(to Natalie)
This is an intervention. You're
totally Natalie.

NATALIE
...What?

KENZIE
We thought you'd be more like
beautiful white swan Natalie
Portman, but you're unravelling
into psychopath red eyes black swan
Natalie Portman.

Natalie is focused on laughter- it's Zoe and Jasmine.

Kenzie and Theo exchange glances. Kenzie waves her hand as
through to say, "Chime in."

THEO
You missed your classes yesterday
and now you're blowing off Trevor.
Something is up with you and we
want to help, okay?

Natalie eyes Kenzie and Theo standing in front of her-
they're schlubby and mismatched. Natalie laughs.

NATALIE
Why don't you guys just work on
helping yourselves, okay?
(to Theo)
And what's-her-face is right,
you're not allowed to be here.

Natalie pushes past Kenzie and Theo.

SENIOR DANCER
What's-her-face?! You were at my
birthday party last week, bitch!

54 INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Dancers line the wall seated with their various cliques:
Jasmine with the cool kids on one side and Kenzie and the
misfits on the other.

Natalie plops down in the center of the studio.

Mr. Constantine, Miss Miyako, and Miss Lana stand in front.

MR. CONSTANTINE
I have a couple of last minute
announcements- Miss Jasmine Kearn
will be filling in as understudy
for the Sugar Plum Fairy.

A few murmurs. Some polite claps.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
The role will be subject to
recasting at the discretion of
myself and Miss Miyako.

MISS LANA
And me. I have a say, too.

Natalie shoots her hand up.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Miss Ross?

NATALIE
Does this only apply to me?

MISS MIYAKO
All soloists have an understudy.

NATALIE
No- am I the only one with a role
subject to recasting at your
discretion? Is there a deadline? Or
am I supposed to be on pins and
needles until closing night?

Mr. Constantine and the other teachers look at each other.

MR. CONSTANTINE
End of October. Halloween. And yes,
it applies to all roles.

Dancers burst in angry protest. Natalie smirks, satisfied and
continues putting on her brand new pointe shoes.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
ENOUGH!

Dancers quiet down.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
This is one of the top Performing
Art schools in the country and you
all shit yourselves over a little
competition? How many plan on
dancing for a company?!

Quiet.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
The best dancer for the role will
play the part. Let's stop half
assing, what do you say?

MISS LANA
Yeah! In ballet we only full-ass!

Mr. Constantine looks at Natalie.

MR. CONSTANTINE
May the best rise to the top.

Natalie looks at Jasmine, who is smiling confidently. Natalie notices Grayson looking at her and quickly averts his eyes.

As Dancers get up and gather their things, Natalie approaches Kenzie and Theo.

NATALIE
So, are you losers ready to rise to
the top?

55 INT. EMPTY CLASSROOM - DAY

Natalie is standing at a white board and writes "R.I.P." on the board. Kenzie and Theo are seated and exchange looks.

THEO
R.I.P.? Are you going to kill us?

NATALIE
First up- Every morning starts with
a Run.

KENZIE
I don't run.

NATALIE
Daily runs is the fastest way to
increase stamina. The more stamina
you have the more you can practice.
And practice makes perfect.

56 BEGIN MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) Natalie meets Kenzie and Theo in running attire.

They begin their slow, pathetic jog around the school.

BACK TO:

57 INT. EMPTY CLASSROOM - DAY

NATALIE

Step Two. Incorporate ballet into everything. Let's face it: Jasmine, Zoe, and Brock put in the time.

KENZIE

But we have other things going on besides ballet.

NATALIE

It's Christmas.

THEO

It's September.

NATALIE

September to December is Nutcracker Season. You can go back to other things in January.

B) In Chemistry class, Natalie is doing leg lifts while checking her own Instagram page. Comment: We miss you Natalie! Comment: Get better soon!

Mr. Hall is handing out test papers and puts Natalie's face down. She flips it over and sees a large red F.

Grayson looks over, concerned. Natalie shrugs.

C) Kenzie and Theo in rehearsal in their spot in the back, turns not as tight as the principals and leaps not as high.

D) Sugar Plum Fairy rehearsal- Pas de Deux.

Natalie and Grayson are dancing up front while Jasmine and Brock mirror them in the back. Natalie is growing stronger- her grand jetes in perfect splits, but Jasmine's extends in an over-split and seems to linger in mid air forever.

Both pairs hit their ending pose. Natalie falls to the floor- exhausted, looking over to Jasmine who is all smiles.

E) Ava's Kitchen. In pointe shoes, Natalie unloads the dishwasher. Going en pointe to put away dishes.

Bean quietly sifts through Ava's backpack, finding a receipt.

BACK TO:

58 INT. EMPTY CLASSROOM - DAY

NATALIE

Number Three: Post all the time.
You both have less than two hundred
followers.

KENZIE

Isn't this supposed to be about
dancing?

NATALIE

This is about being desirable.

Natalie pulls up Zoe's Instagram page and swipes through photos of Zoe: amazing poses and perfect lighting.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

If it's between you and Zoe. Who do
you think it's harder to say no to?

F) Outside. Natalie, Kenzie, and Theo are running steadily.

G) Hallway. Natalie at Ava's locker decorated with photos of Ava and Trevor. She closes it.

Natalie opens Ava's locker- it's transformed with a collage of ballerina photos and quotes.

Trevor sees this from his locker across the hall and sadly pulls down a photo of him and Ava looking happy.

H) Shots of the understudies in rehearsal in their spot in the back, extensions at their shoulders, but principals have their extensions by their ears.

I) Shot after shot of Ava, Kenzie and Theo's Instagram pages. Hearts growing by the thousands.

BACK TO:

59 INT. EMPTY CLASSROOM - DAY

Kenzie stands up.

KENZIE

Now your turn. Have you been Winter
Solider'ed?

NATALIE

This is it. Senior Year! I want my
swan song and we have one last
Nutcracker. Jasmine Kearn is not
playing my role. R.I.P., Bitches.

J) Theo, Kenzie and Natalie are all doing their morning jog-
this time mixing in leaps and turns while they jog.

K) ICU Room 202. Natalie walking holding two coffees in a
cardboard Coffee Lovers tray in one hand and Ava's phone in
the other hand- now full of pictures at rehearsal, doing
dance poses, and selfies with Kenzie and Theo. All smiles.

Followers are now at 7,860. Comment: "You're beautiful,
Ava!", "Ava is a #BallerinaBoss"

Mr. Primavera straightens up with company. Natalie looks up
and smile drops upon seeing her body in casts and hooked up
with tubes for the first time.

60

INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Sugar Plum Fairy Pas de Deux. The Pianist is now accompanied
with a VIOLINIST. Natalie and Jasmine look nearly identical.

Mrs. Primavera enters and she double takes seeing Natalie
dance, she leans into the wall taking a deep breath- moved.

After the final drop Natalie sits on the floor, out of
breath. Mr. Constantine shakes his head.

NATALIE

What?

Mr. Constantine snaps. The musicians play the Pas De Deux.

MR. CONSTANTINE

How does this song make you feel?

NATALIE

It's in four-four and the melody
goes down a major scale and... it
makes me think of a fairy made of
sugar plums?

Mr. Constantine takes Natalie's hand and they step through
the routine.

MR. CONSTANTINE
This is the last piece Tchaikovsky
wrote for this ballet after
learning of his sister's death.

NATALIE
So this song is about his sister?

JASMINE
You don't get it.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Miss Kearn, let the teachers stick
to teaching, eh?
(to Natalie)
Can't you hear it? The bitter sweet
end of saying goodbye.

Natalie studies Mr. Constantine, he gives her a knowing nod.

NATALIE
I'm not ready.

MR. CONSTANTINE
We don't say goodbye because we're
ready.

Both Miss Lana and Miss Miyako have tears in their eyes.

MISS LANA
Stop! I can't listen to this
anymore!
(to Miss Miyako)
My divorce.

Miss Miyako puts her hand on Miss Lana's shoulder.

The Musicians stop.

MISS MIYAKO
Okay dancers! I think that's all
for today. Great rehearsal.
Remember tomorrow, you CAN wear
your Halloween costumes, but you
still need to be able to dance.

Natalie quickly grabs her bag, eyeing Mr. Constantine who is
talking to the other teachers.

MISS MIYAKO (CONT'D)
Kenzie and Zoe... Aaaand Brock and
Theo. Can you stick around?

Natalie's eyebrows shoot up. Kenzie, Zoe, Brock and Theo move toward the three teachers.

MRS. PRIMAVERA (O.S.)

Ava?

Mrs. Primavera timidly approaches Natalie.

MRS. PRIMAVERA (CONT'D)

Can I show you something?

61 INT. SMALL STUDIO - DAY

Natalie is dancing the Pas de Deux with Mrs. Primavera half stepping through the role of Prince Cavalier. There's no music, replaced with the sound of Natalie working- breathing and pointe shoes thumping and grinding.

Mrs. Primavera corrects Natalie with gentle touches- pulling up her chin and arms. Natalie finishes with a smile.

MRS. PRIMAVERA

Very nice. You and Natalie have the same bad habits. It's easier for someone on the outside to see what's going wrong sometimes.

NATALIE

Oh. Uh, have you seen Natalie?
You're so busy with rehearsal.

Mrs. Primavera freezes.

Jasmine pops her head into the studio.

JASMINE

Oh, sorry. Are we still on?

MRS. PRIMAVERA

Yep, we're all done here.

(to Natalie)

Jasmine needs my help with her Royal Ballet audition.

Natalie flashes Jasmine a stunned look. Jasmine winks.

62 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Natalie enters the hallway from the studio and pulls the Snow Globe out of her bag when-

TREVOR (O.S.)

Boo!

Natalie jumps back in surprise and sees Trevor. She quickly shoves the Globe back in its hiding place.

NATALIE

What are you doing here?

TREVOR

(holds up viola)

Rehearsing. Orchestra for the show.
I'll be in the pit, you'll be
dancing. We'll be together again.
Like fate.

NATALIE

I gotta go.

TREVOR

(pulls out flowers)

Here! I just wanted you to know I'm
here for you. Always. And I'm
wearing my half of our costume
tomorrow.

NATALIE

Your half? Actually don't tell me.

She takes the flowers and heads down the hall. Trevor's chin trembles a bit. Zoe bursts out of the studio sobbing with Brock comforting her.

Kenzie exits with Theo a moment later and sees Trevor sulking on one end of the hall and Natalie on the other swiftly walking. Kenzie's frowns, eyes narrow.

63 INT. ICU ROOM 202 - NIGHT

Natalie enters with Trevor's flowers. Mr. Primavera is drinking coffee and has a second untouched cup. Nurse Sandy is switching out IV tubes.

She takes the flowers from Natalie and puts them in a vase.

NATALIE

Any news?

MR. PRIMAVERA

She's stirring a lot. Doc thinks it
can happen any day now.

(beat)

(MORE)

MR. PRIMAVERA (CONT'D)
You see her other friends around?
Jasmine and Zoe and Brock?

NATALIE
Every day in rehearsal. Mrs.
Primavera, too.

Natalie sits down next to Mr. Primavera. He hands her the second cup of coffee.

Ava's phone buzzes, it says "MOM." Natalie swipes to ignore. Mr. Primavera looks at her- concerned.

MR. PRIMAVERA
So tell me about yourself. What do you plan on doing after school?

NATALIE
I wanted to dance professionally,
but I don't think that's possible.

MR. PRIMAVERA
Well, I happen to know nothing is impossible. Natalie would tell you that. She has a goal and she's after it like a runaway train.

NATALIE
Runaway train makes it sound bad.

Mr. Primavera swallows, looking at his daughter's body.

64 INT. AVA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Bean sits at the table dressed as Marie Antoinette with a bloody neck. Natalie enters dressed as the Sugar Plum Fairy. Ms. Ross holds up a large gray sphere costume.

MS. ROSS
Ta-da! Here it is! I wanted to show this to you last night, but- Is that a new costume?

NATALIE
Oh! It's Venus! Men are from Mars,
Women are from venus! That IS a cute couple costume.

BEAN
(jotting in her diary)
Interesting.

MS. ROSS
I spent all night on this costume.

NATALIE
Aww, that's super sweet. Well, I gotta run- I need to get to the studio before anyone else.

MS. ROSS
It's two hours before school starts! Can we talk? Hi? Hello?

Natalie walks off.

Ms. Ross with a flustered sigh starts angrily opening mail and gasps as she pulls out a credit card bill of \$2,670.

Front door slams closed.

65 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ms. Ross walks into the bedroom. Bean following close behind her. She looks underneath Ava's bed, her dresser drawers.

BEAN
What are you looking for, Mom?

MS. ROSS
Something isn't right with her.
She's eating drugs or cutting
herself or something.

BEAN
You're looking for drugs or razor
blades?

MS. ROSS
I'm looking for proof I'm not
crazy!

Bean walks over and pulls out a folder underneath her bed. She hands it to her mom.

It's a chemistry test with an F on it. Ms. Ross's jaw drops. She snatches the folder. It's paper after paper with "D" "C-" "F" "DO BETTER" "NOT YOUR BEST" written in red ink.

BEAN
She is on drugs, Mom: Two cups of caffeine per day. But I have eight theories, do you want to hear them?

Ms. Ross peers up to a large black and white poster over Ava's bed of Patricia McBride as the Sugar Plum Fairy.

INT. ICU ROOM 202 - DAY

POV of eyes opening. We see Mr. Primavera, Nurse Sandy, and DOCTOR PATEL all standing above.

DOCTOR PATEL

Good morning. I'm Doctor Patel. Can you tell me why you're here?

AVA

I'm in a hospital?

DOCTOR PATEL

You're at St. John's Hospital. Can you tell me your name?

AVA

Ava?

All exchange a concerned glance.

MR. PRIMAVERA

(explaining)

Ava is a friend from school. She's been visiting.

DOCTOR PATEL

What's your birthday?

AVA

May Fourteenth?

They look at Mr. Primavera. He shakes his head, "No."

AVA (CONT'D)

(to Mr. Primavera)

Where's my mom? Who are you?

Mr. Primavera's heart breaks.

DOCTOR PATEL

Uh- some confusion is to be expected with this kind of trauma. Sandy, would you-

NURSE SANDY

(phone out)

Already Googling it.

The lights flicker.

AVA
What was that?

All look up at the ceiling.

Ava's eyes squint trying to make out her reflection in the TV hanging in the corner of the room. The TV THUMPS and shoots out a screaming Smokey Dancer before dissipating. Ava GASPS.

The walls BOOM, squeezing the room. AVA SCREAMS and begins to scramble to get out of the bed.

Doctor Patel and Nurse Sandy jump into action.

DOCTOR PATEL
Two milligrams of lorazepam!

Nurse Sandy applies some medication to the IV drip while Doctor Patel secures her arms in restraints.

AVA
Mom!
(falling asleep)
I want my mom.

MR. PRIMAVERA
Is this normal?

DOCTOR PATEL
(hesitates)
There's a broad range of normal.

Ava's eyes get heavy and close again.

66 INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Natalie, dressed as the Sugar Plum Fairy, walks into the dark studio and plugs Ava's phone into the speakers.

The Pas de Deux music starts and Natalie puts on her pointe shoes and starts to warm up.

GRAYSON (O.S.)
Kind of a hard dance to do without
a partner, isn't it?

Grayson is standing at the door dressed as a Werewolf.

NATALIE
What are you doing here?

GRAYSON
I couldn't let you make me look
bad, could I?

The two join together and begin to dance.

NATALIE
I'm just making up for lost time.

GRAYSON
I can see that.
(beat)
Do you know how Natalie is doing?

NATALIE
How would I know that?

GRAYSON
I swung by the hospital. Her dad
said you've been stopping by.

NATALIE
You swung by? Why? You knew her for
like one day.

GRAYSON
I don't know, I've been thinking
about her. I was there when she
fell. I wish I would have said
something to stop her.

NATALIE
I don't know if there's anything
you could have said to stop her.

They dance. Awkward silence.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Inspiration is a guest that does
not willingly visit the lazy.
Tchaikovsky said that.

GRAYSON
Is there a chip in your brain?

NATALIE
What?

GRAYSON
Sorry, stupid joke. I mean, are you
always this intense?

NATALIE
...Is that a bad thing?

GRAYSON

Not at all. You know exactly what you want- I mean you dressed as a ballerina for Halloween. That's next level.

Natalie blushes.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)

Okay. So, I got this offer from Houston Ballet-

NATALIE

What?! That's amazing.

GRAYSON

Well, that's the thing. I like dancing. I love it. But I don't know if I love it enough to commit my life to it, you know?

NATALIE

I think I wish I was more like you.

Grayson smiles. They dance quietly for a moment.

GRAYSON

Hey, so do you want to like, grab some food or coffee or watch a movie or whatever?

NATALIE

Or whatever?

GRAYSON

Yeah, whatever will get you to hang out with me.

NATALIE

Uh-

(laughs)

Are we not hanging out?

GRAYSON

I meant more... Socially. What are you doing tonight-

NATALIE

I don't date. I just- I don't have time, you know? I barely have time to do anything. I haven't been to the movies since I was like nine.

GRAYSON
 Since you were NINE? You gotta go,
 it's amazing. Popcorn, stadium
 seating, 3D, 4D...

Natalie smiles. Does she like him? Grayson takes her hand to keep moving through the choreography. They look at one another and stop- Are they about to kiss?

TREVOR (O.S.)
 Ava? Who is this guy?

They turn to see Trevor: He's dressed in a nude bodysuit with a short blonde wig and bright red lipstick.

NATALIE
 (Ugh)
 This guy.

GRAYSON
 Who are you supposed to be?

TREVOR
 (choking up)
 Miley Cyrus.
 (to Natalie)
 And you were supposed to be my
 wrecking ball.

NATALIE
 Oooh. The planet costume!
 (laughs)
 Hey, that's pretty clever.

TREVOR
 Well, I can see you moved on.

Trevor leaves. Natalie sheepishly smiles at Grayson.

Trevor pops back in.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
 Everything hurts. Even my pinky
 hurts. I don't get it. You took my
 virginity.

Trevor exits. Natalie's smile fades- guilt? The bell rings.

67 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Natalie is at Ava's locker and Kenzie comes up, dressed as Little Red Riding Hood and Theo as a Jedi.

KENZIE

I'm not an understudy! I'm Clara!

NATALIE

What?!

THEO

And I'm the Russian soloist!

NATALIE

That means I'm safe, right? Jasmine
didn't take my role?!

KENZIE

R.I.P., Bitches! Selfie time!

Natalie lifts Ava's phone just as a call comes in: "Mr. PRIMAVERA" pops on screen.

KENZIE (CONT'D)

Why is Natalie's dad calling you?

Down the hallway, we hear a viola playing "Wrecking Ball". It's Trevor, playing the song, with his lip quivering and he begins singing- terribly.

TREVOR

(singing)

We clawed, we chained, our hearts
in vain, we jumped, never asking
why...

NATALIE

Oh my god.

STUDENTS giggle at Trevor who keeps singing.

Ava's phone buzzes again. Natalie answers.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Hello?

Suddenly, a STRING QUARTET pulls their instruments from their lockers and starts accompanying Trevor.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

(holding her ear)

Hello?!

MR. PRIMAVERA (O.S.)

(staticky)

Natalie woke up!

NATALIE

What?!

Natalie looks up and sees her mother, Mrs. Primavera, walking down the far end of the hall with an arm full of tutus. Mrs. Primavera is greeted by Jasmine with a hug.

MR. PRIMAVERA (O.S.)

Hello?

NATALIE

Why isn't Mom there?!

MR. PRIMAVERA (O.S.)

What was that?

The CHOIR/GLEE CLUB steps out from behind Trevor and starts singing the chorus of the song.

NATALIE

Hello?!

TREVOR

You're my wrecking ball, Ava!

NATALIE

I have to go.

KENZIE

Where are you going, Ava?

The lights flicker. The row of lockers THUMP as though something were trying to escape. Natalie breathes in sharply.

NATALIE

Did you see that?

KENZIE

I don't think I'll ever unsee that.
Is he naked?! Where's his penis?

The locker right next to Natalie POUNDS from the inside.

Natalie SCREAMS and covers her eyes.

As her scream echoes down the hallway, everyone goes quiet, and all eyes turn to her.

From behind Natalie, Principal Waters clears his throat. She turns to look at him.

Principal Waters sits behind his desk with Mr. Constantine, Miss Miyako, and Miss Lana standing beside him. Across the desk, Natalie is seated with Ms. Ross.

PRINCIPAL WATERS
I'm sure you know why you're here.

NATALIE
(nervously)
I'm not sure actually.

PRINCIPAL WATERS
Your grades are dangerously low.
And Mr. Hall has had a few comments
about your attitude lately-

NATALIE
Who?

PRINCIPAL WATERS
Mr. Hall. Chemistry.

NATALIE
Oh. Well, he's a VERY brittle man.

Miss Lana nods.

MS. ROSS
Ava!

NATALIE
That's not an insult. It's an
observation.

PRINCIPAL WATERS
And your mother is concerned with
your behavior at home.

NATALIE
You went to the Principal to talk
about me at home?

Ms. Ross pulls out credit card bill.

MS. ROSS
Now that I finally have your
attention. You've spent over two
thousand dollars on dance apparel.

NATALIE
Pointe shoes are expensive. Do you
want me to dance with dead shoes?

MISS LANA
It IS dangerous to dance on dead
shoes, Mrs. Ross.

MS. ROSS
MS. Ross.
(to Natalie)
And since when did you start
Ubering everywhere? You know we
can't afford that.

PRINCIPAL WATERS
And you haven't been participating
in your work-study, which is a
required part of your tuition
assistance.

NATALIE
I've been working my as- butt off.

MISS MIYAKO
Ava, we love your new found
dedication. It's remarkable how
much you've transformed yourself in
such a short time. We know you're
working very hard on your dancing.

Silence.

NATALIE
But?

PRINCIPAL WATERS
But we've collectively decided that
Jasmine Kearn will be taking over
the Sugar Fairy role and-

NATALIE
No! I've worked too hard to be just
the understudy.

PRINCIPAL WATERS
Actually, you won't be
participating in this year's
Nutcracker at all.

NATALIE
But this is my last Nutcracker!
(beat)
Because I'm a Senior.

MS. ROSS
This was just supposed to be for
fun, Ava.

NATALIE

No, you think this should just be for fun. I never said that. This is the most important thing to me.

MR. CONSTANTINE

It's just a role in a high school production, Miss Ross. This isn't your whole life.

NATALIE

Is this some kind of lesson you're trying to teach me?

ALL

Yes.

NATALIE

I'm the Sugar Plum Fairy. I can do the role and get my grades up and my work-study. Just don't give it to Jasmine. Please.

70 INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Everyone is wearing Halloween costumes.

Natalie is in the back of studio dancing with Brock and glaring at Jasmine who is dancing the pas de deux with Grayson up front.

Jasmine wipes a tear, missing a cue. Natalie rolls her eyes, but continues dancing.

JASMINE

I'm sorry. It got the better of me.

The music stops.

NATALIE

We're still going here.

MR. CONSTANTINE

You four dance together.

NATALIE

Wasn't our fault she messed up.

BROCK

We had to stop every time you fell on your ass.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Enough! Miss Ross, a word?

JASMINE
(sarcastically)
Don't worry. We'll wait for you.

71 INT. MR. CONSTANTINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Constantine closes the door.

MR. CONSTANTINE
You're being a sore loser.

NATALIE
You made me the understudy!

MR. CONSTANTINE
Principal Waters made you the
understudy. You should be off this
production.

NATALIE
So you gave Jasmine the role to
force me to switch?

MR. CONSTANTINE
You should be switching back
regardless of what role you have.

NATALIE
I was helping the show!

MR. CONSTANTINE
Someday we all have to find our
second dream. You don't think I was
like you once? I was a fool to
think you'd learn from being Ava.
Instead you fail her classes, broke
up with her boyfriend-

NATALIE
He's a loser.

MR. CONSTANTINE
He dresses as a naked woman and
gets his whole class to play a song
for her. Who does that for you, eh?

Natalie is quiet- stung.

Natalie carefully pulls the Snow Globe out of Ava's bag.

NATALIE

I did learn from being Ava. My friends are fake, my mother doesn't want anything to do with me if I can't dance, and the the only thing I've been working towards my whole life is no longer possible.

Natalie SMASHES the Globe into to the ground.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Why would I switch back?!

The room engulfs in green light and black smoke until they form into two SMOKEY DANCERS, papers fly everywhere like snowflakes swirling.

MR. CONSTANTINE

What have you done?! You've let them loose.

The Smokey Dancers shoot out of the office window- into the world. Papers fall to the floor as the room settles. Natalie, breathing uneasy, runs off.

72

INT. AVA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ms. Ross and Bean faces are illuminated by a green glow. Ms. Ross's face is awestruck.

MS. ROSS

This is magical.

BEAN

Uh oh, I've unleashed a monster.

MS. ROSS

It's like a whole new world I had no idea existed.

BEAN

It's just Instagram, Mom.

They're seated at the breakfast bar looking at an iPad.

MS. ROSS

And where is Ava?

Bean goes to Ava's page. Ms. Ross's brow furrows as she looks at picture after picture of Ava's dance poses.

BEAN

What's wrong?

MS. ROSS

I don't recognize my own daughter.

BEAN

Okay, theory twelve: Have you noticed her dipping into a British accent? You delivered twins didn't you?!

73 INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Natalie, hands shaking, empties out her locker. Ava's phone buzzes: "Mr. Primavera." Natalie swipes to ignore. Natalie shuts her now empty locker closed, turns and-

Kenzie is standing right there.

KENZIE

You're quitting?! Did the Karate Kid quit when he broke his leg? Did Matt Damon quit when he was stuck on Mars?

NATALIE

Why do you care? You got your role. You're welcome, by the way.

KENZIE

For what?

NATALIE

For what? For dragging you out for 5 A.M. jogs, working with you, building up your Instagram. I got you that role.

KENZIE

I didn't care about being the understudy! This was about us making the best of our last Nutcracker before you're off to Boston and I'm at USC. We're never going to have time like this again. I thought this was about Senior year and us spending time together.

NATALIE

You thought getting up at 5 A.M. was for us to spend time together?

Natalie softens. Then Ava's phone buzzes- it's Mr. Primavera. Her finger hovers over ignore, but instead- Natalie exits- leaving her duffel bag behind.

Kenzie sighs defeated, picking up Natalie's bag and notices the Royal Ballet keychain looped around the zipper.

74 EXT. MR. HALL'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Mr. Hall puts an open container of cat food on a small tombstone that reads "Catastrophe, the Best Cat Ever."

Several cats roam his yard.

MR. HALL

Things haven't been the same without you, Catastrophe. We have a new friend now- Rex. You'd like him. I wish you could meet him.

Mr. Hall exits.

A moment later the Smokey Dancer enters the grave and exits.

The ground pulses.

75 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM 304 - NIGHT

Natalie enters cautiously. Her body lies asleep. Natalie walks toward her body and Ava's EYES OPEN. Natalie SHRIEKS.

AVA

Shhhh!

NATALIE

Oh my God! What are you doing?!

AVA

I've been pretending to sleep so they won't talk to me!

Ava examines Natalie- her body standing in front of her, mascara streaked as though she's been crying.

AVA (CONT'D)
Is it- Are you...

NATALIE

Natalie Primavera.

AVA

Wow. I look different.

NATALIE

You're welcome.

Natalie and Ava stare at each other in silence.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Where's Dad?

AVA
Cafeteria. I told him I wanted to
be alone. He told me what happened.
The fall. The Instagram picture.

NATALIE
And you told him you were Natalie?

AVA
I had to.
(leans in)
I can fix this. A snow globe from
Mr. Constantine's office-

NATALIE
That snow globe is destroyed.

AVA
...What?

NATALIE
And we're most likely stuck as each
other. Possibly forever.

Ava looks at her stunned and then bursts into tears.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
It's not so bad, you have a wealthy
family now and you can study really
hard and go to Harvard like you
wanted. It was not easy for me to
face being you forever. Trust me.

AVA
What about Trevor? And my family?

NATALIE
Well, you can still date Trevor.
It's gonna be a big upgrade for him
to date you as me. And Mom and-

AVA
You call my mom Mom?

NATALIE
It's become a habit.

AVA
(sobs)
Oh. I miss her.

Natalie swallows- doesn't know what to say. She leans in to give Ava a hug. Ava takes the cue and quickly scoops both of her arms tightly around Natalie, crying into her shoulder.

AVA (CONT'D)
You seriously have the best dad. He
brings me coffee everyday.
(sniffle)
I hate coffee.

Natalie pulls out of the hug- regretful, confused, and sad.

NATALIE
Why did you do this?

AVA
I don't know, my dad left and senior year and I was just tired of being me and I thought for a second I might be the Sugar Plum Fairy and be like you. Always posting these beautiful pictures. And I know, Instagram isn't... Real. But, it's like watching a magic trick- you look for the strings and when you can't find them, you start to believe in the magic.

NATALIE
I spend six hours in the studio six days a week, 45 minutes doing my hair and makeup, and I can't remember a time I had big toenails.

AVA
That still sounds glamorous.

NATALIE
You've got so much going for you. You're a total brain and hotty to boot. Your mom is badass working a million jobs and you have friends. Real friends. I bet they'd be in this hospital room everyday if it were you.

AVA
I'm gonna miss them.

NATALIE

(beat)

I'm gonna figure this out, okay?

MR. PRIMAVERA (O.S.)

Figure what out?

Mr. Primavera enters with two cups of coffee.

NATALIE

Nothing. High school shit.

Natalie reaches for the coffee and Mr. Primavera pulls back.

MR. PRIMAVERA

This is for Natalie. Sorry- I
wasn't expecting you. I wasn't sure
you got my messages.

Mr. Primavera and Natalie stand quietly for a moment.

MR. PRIMAVERA (CONT'D)

Do you mind coming back tomorrow?
I'd like some time with my Nattie.

NATALIE

Oh. Sure.

Natalie walks out the door, pausing to watch as Dad hands Ava a coffee. Ava forces a smile.

76

INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Natalie walks in to find Kenzie with her duffel bag and Bean are sitting on Ava's bed with Bean's pink diary out.

NATALIE

What's going on?

Kenzie gives Natalie a big hug.

KENZIE

I brought your bag.

(beat)

Hey Natalie?

NATALIE

Yeah? I mean, wait- what?

KENZIE

You've been off since the fall, the
ballet and Instagram obsession, the
Royal Ballet zipper-

Bean pulls out the receipt from her book.

BEAN

And this receipt you signed as
Natalie Primavera?

NATALIE

I didn't want this, okay?! Ava made
this wish and now- I don't know, I
thought I was helping her and now
everything is screwed up.

KENZIE

It's okay. We're going to help you
switch back.

NATALIE

How?

KENZIE

Don't you watch movies? By learning
how to be Ava you'll switch back to
being Natalie.

77 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Natalie stands next to a white board that reads "F.A.R."

NATALIE

First off, family. I need to get
Mom off my back-

BEAN

Ava and Mom are really close. She
works two jobs and cries in the car
when she thinks I can't see her.

NATALIE/KENZIE

Wow.

BEAN

And she still texts Dad even though
he left her for a 24 year old, but
she told us he moved to South Korea
for work.

NATALIE

How do you know that?

BEAN

I read her text messages.

NATALIE
Where's my phone?

78 INT. AVA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Ava's Kitchen. Natalie sets the table for three. Ms. Ross walks in on the phone and Natalie hands her a cup of coffee.

MS. ROSS
(to phone)
I'm just wondering if the late fees
can be waived- just this once.
(looks at Natalie)
I understand. Typically that card
is only used in emergencies.

BACK TO:

79 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

NATALIE
Next. Academics. Right now, Ava's failing Chemistry-

BEAN
You mean YOU'RE failing Chemistry.

KENZIE
You need to end the semester with an A. Or else Ava is definitely not getting into Harvard.

NATALIE
Easy.

80 INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Natalie is sweeping the studio floor walking en pointe. With earbuds in she listens to Mr. Hall's lecture-

MR. HALL (V.O.)
A Happy Atom is an atomic shell
that is full. Sometimes atoms have
an extra electron or two and-

Natalie glances over as Mr. Constatine rushes out of his office with an arm full of books. A note taped to the door that reads, "The End is Near."

81 INT. CHEMISTRY CLASS - DAY

MR. HALL
Who can tell me why water molecules
are attracted to each other?

Natalie raises her leg to her ear as "raising her hand."

MR. HALL (CONT'D)
Ava?

NATALIE
Because water molecules have both a
positive hydrogen charge and
negative oxygen charge.

MR. HALL
That's correct.

Grayson flashes Natalie a smile. Natalie beams.

BACK TO:

82 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kenzie walks up and adds "T" at the end of "F.A.R."

KENZIE
Before we go on, we need to talk
about Trevor.

NATALIE
She can do better than him.

KENZIE
Trevor's amazing. So whatever
you're doing with Grayson needs to
stop until after you switch back.

NATALIE
One. Nothing is going on with
Grayson. Two. What? I'm supposed to
get back together with Trevor?
They've had sex, you know. Am I
supposed to have sex with Trevor?

BEAN
Yes! You do it for Ava!

KENZIE
NO! Don't do that. Just steer clear
of Grayson. And be nice to Trevor.

83 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Natalie is at Ava's locker. Trevor is at his across the hall. She looks over at him, he fumbles trying to pull something out of his locker. Everything falls out.

Natalie rolls her eyes, takes a deep breath and shuts Ava's locker. She helps Trevor pick up his things.

NATALIE

Look, I know it seems like I've been mean to you.

TREVOR

No, you asked for space and I got you stupid flowers-

NATALIE

(it's okay)

The flowers were sweet. I get you're trying to get me back-

TREVOR

I'm not trying to get you back. That was the one year anniversary of when your dad left. I know you miss him.

NATALIE

Oh.

Trevor stands up to walk away. Natalie stands and bumps into Grayson. She stumbles and Grayson catches her, dipped like in a dance. They're face to face.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

(blushing)

Thanks for the catch.

Trevor sees their moment and exits- running down the hall in half sob. Natalie watches him with a sigh.

BACK TO:

84 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Natalie circles "Role."

NATALIE

The Sugar Plum Fairy is my destiny.

KENZIE

Yes! And you switch back to give it
to Ava. The real understudy!

NATALIE

But this is my role. My last role.

Kenzie flips over the white board revealing a list of movies:
Freaky Friday, The Hot Chick, The Change Up, etc.

KENZIE

In all of these. A cosmic lesson,
magic, and ta da! Natural order
restored.

BEAN

Hold up! Are we IN a movie?!

NATALIE

Stop being weird. Wait, natural
order? Where did you hear that?

KENZIE

Mr. Constantine monologues about it
all the time during rehearsal. Oh,
and there's usually a wishing well
or fortune cookies or something.

Natalie sits quietly.

85 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - DAY

Empty audience. Miss Miyako watches the Pas de Deux as Mr. Constantine sits next to her, disheveled and twitchy, frantically flipping through a large ancient book.

Jasmine and Grayson are in the front and Natalie and Brock in the back. The four dancers look identical.

As they strike the final pose, Jasmine looks to Natalie. Jasmine is out of breath, smile dropped and eyes wide with worry. Natalie, breathing heavily through a forced smile.

MISS MIYAKO

Miss Kearn, you're not making use
of the stage.

JASMINE

It's hard with the understudies
taking up half of it.

MISS MIYAKO
Okay, let's run it without the
Understudies this time.

86 INT. STAGE WINGS - CONTINUOUS

Miss Lana, clipboard in hand, waves Natalie over.

MISS LANA
Mrs. Primavera wants to make some
adjustments on your costume.

87 INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Zoe is seated on her phone, waiting for her turn as Mrs. Primavera fits Natalie with various costume pieces.

Natalie notices her mother's touch- moving away wisps of her hair to measure her.

MRS. PRIMAVERA
The way you dance- it reminds me of
Natalie.

NATALIE
Ballet all looks the same when it's
done right.

MRS. PRIMAVERA
You and her, you have the same-
something. It's hard to explain.

Natalie stays silent.

MRS. PRIMAVERA (CONT'D)
Your mother must be so proud.

ZOE
Life is so unfair. Natalie can't
play the Sugar Plum Fairy and I'm
spending my senior year in the
corps. How lame is that?

NATALIE
Kenzie worked her ass off for that
role. On top of taking AP classes
and college applications. Do you
know how hard that is?

ZOE
Yeah, some of us don't want to
settle for college.
(MORE)

ZOE (CONT'D)
Do you know how hard it is to
become an influencer? How else will
Ansel fall in love with me? I just
wish I could have fifty thousand
followers, marry Ansel Elgort, and
die.

The Smokey Dancer WHOOSHES by the mirror behind Natalie. She turns. There's nothing there. Lights flicker on and off.

Zoe's phone buzzes and she looks at it.

ZOE (CONT'D)
Whoa.

Zoe hurries off.

Natalie checks her phone and Zoe's page is at 50K followers.

ZOE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*ANSEL ELGORT IS FOLLOWING ME ON
INSTAGRAM!!! I'M SERIOUSLY FREAKING
OUT RIGHT NOW. I can't breathe. I
can't breathe.*

Zoe pops into the room.

MRS. PRIMAVERA
Ava's all done.

ZOE
I need to hug someone right now!

Zoe bear hugs Natalie.

Natalie swaps positions with Zoe. Mrs. Primavera starts taking Zoe's measurements.

Natalie gives Zoe a puzzled look before leaving the room.

ZOE (CONT'D)
*ANSEL ELGORT JUST GAVE MY LAST PIC
A HEART! HE'S LOOKING AT MY FEED
RIGHT NOW! I'm gonna post a selfie!
Should I keep my shirt on?*

INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - DAY

Brock and Theo perform the Russian dance as a duet. Mr. Constatine flips through an ancient book as Miss Miyako is clapping along to the Russian music.

NATALIE

Mr. Constantine, can I talk to you?

Mr. Constantine lifts up his finger shushing her, still looking at his book. Natalie watches the duet.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Works well as a duet. What made you think of it?

MISS MIYAKO

It was their idea. So neither would miss out on the role.

MR. CONSTANTINE

(to Natalie)

Thinking of someone else. What a novel idea, huh?

Theo and Brock finish, breathing heavily.

MISS MIYAKO

I love it!

MR. CONSTANTINE

(to Natalie)

You come for a reason or are you wasting my time, Instagram?

Miss Miyako shoots Mr. Constantine a look. He watches Natalie walk off regretfully before turning back to his book.

90

INT. AVA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Natalie walks in. Ms. Ross is waiting, arms crossed.

MS. ROSS

I just got off the phone with Mr. Hall. You're failing Chemistry.

NATALIE

That's impossible. I got a B plus on the last test!

MS. ROSS

One test!

Ms. Ross pulls out the Royal Ballet Audition packet.

MS. ROSS (CONT'D)

And what the hell is this?

NATALIE

You don't think I can get in?

MS. ROSS

What am I supposed to think, huh?
One day you want to be a bio
engineer and today you want to be a
ballerina!

NATALIE

Mrs. Primavera is at every
rehearsal, ask her how good I am!
You haven't even been to one.

MS. ROSS

And who is she there for, huh? Her
daughter is rotting away in a
hospital bed while she spends her
days with other people's kids.

Natalie is gutted.

NATALIE

I'm auditioning for Royal Ballet
and I'll be out of your life just
like your husband. Or Dad,
whatever. No wonder he left you and
this shitty life with your shitty
your daughters.

MS. ROSS

Who are you?

Natalie wavers- should she tell her?

BEAN (O.S.)

Natalie Primavera!

Bean's face peaks into the room.

MS. ROSS

Go to your room, Bean!

NATALIE

Will you stop blowing her off? And
put a lock on your phone?! She
knows about the 24 year old!

Ms. Ross sits- defeated.

MS. ROSS

When your dance career ends at
what- 30? 35?

(MORE)

MS. ROSS (CONT'D)
 That's 30 or 40 more years of a career you'll need after that. You need to think about those years too, Ava.

NATALIE

I know, okay?! Every little doubt you have, I have ten fold! It's constant at every audition and every day. I'm killing myself to get my grades up, work-study, to get ready for this show- I'm seventeen and you want me to think about when I'm 40?! You want A's. You want a social life. You want me to never make a single mistake. I have the whole world to tell me I can't do it and my own mom is done with me cause I can't be what she wanted me to become.

Ms. Ross envelopes Natalie in a hug.

MS. ROSS

I'm never done with you. Never. I just want you to be happy. Tell me what will make you happy and I'm on board 100 percent.

91 EXT. MR. CONSTANTINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Natalie rings the doorbell. A set of TRIPLETS, age 5, dressed in armor answer the door.

NATALIE

Um, is your dad home?

TRIPLETS

(Romanian)

Father!

92 INT. MR. CONSTANTINE'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Natalie is sitting there with Fritz across from her holding wooden sword, staring solemnly. The TRIPLETS are playing with her hair. A pair of TWINS, age 11, are playing the piano. A TODDLER colors a whole piece of paper black.

Moving boxes are everywhere.

MRS. CONSTANTINE walks in, very pregnant and with a BABY in her arms. She's carrying a tray with drinks in her other arm.

NATALIE
You have beautiful children.

MRS. CONSTANTINE
Only Fritz is the beauty. Aren't
you, Fritz?

FRITZ
Yes, Mama.

Natalie looks at the other children who don't flinch.

MRS. CONSTANTINE
Are you the best child?

NATALIE
My sister is definitely the best
right now. Wait, no. I don't have a
sister. It's complicated.

Mr. Constantine walks in.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Mr. Constantine! I need your help.
Weird stuff is happening and I'm
seeing things. Like shadows.

MR. CONSTANTINE
The wraiths!

TRIPLETS
(Romanian)
*Already?! They're stronger than you
said, Father!*

TWINS
(Romanian)
Finish packing, Mother!

FRITZ
(Romanian)
No! The show must go on!

MR. CONSTANTINE
Enough!

NATALIE
Wait, what are the wraiths?

MR. CONSTANTINE
Mischievous spirits. The globe you
carelessly and intentionally broke,
was a stabilizer, an enforcer of
sorts.

Mr. Constantine snaps his fingers. Fritz retrieves a box and hands it to his father. Natalie looks around.

NATALIE

What's going on? Are you moving?

MR. CONSTANTINE

Yes, we'll be returning to Romania after the last Nutcracker.

NATALIE

You mean last of the school year?

MR. CONSTANTINE

Sure. Whatever helps you sleep. Why are you here?

NATALIE

Is it possible to trap these wraiths and fix everything?

Mr. Constantine sits up, opens the box and takes out a curved piece of the broken glass from the snow globe.

MR. CONSTANTINE

In order for the natural order to be restored, the wraiths must be contained. These wraiths are summoned by wishes, so we may be able to recapture them if you weren't a self-serving monster.

Natalie takes a deep breath and nods.

NATALIE

I'm ready to go back. I'm messing up Ava's life and I'm not happy.

(swallows)

What if we can't contain them?

MR. CONSTANTINE

In all my years as a keeper, no one has ever been as careless as you. So, I don't know-

Mr. Constantine looks at the large mural behind him: a scene from the Rapture with wraiths disemboweling screaming people.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)

But I've heard it's very, very bad.

93 INT. MR. HALL'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Hall watches *I Love Lucy*, laughing with the laugh track.

Although he is surrounded by CATS, he hears a distant MEOW that catches his attention.

MR. HALL

Sounds like somebody is hungry for some food and friendship.

(to his cats)

Come on, friends. Let's go meet our new neighbor.

Mr. Hall makes his way down the narrow corridor. His house is designed to be a cat paradise. He passes cat condos and nooks built for his "friends."

94 INT/EXT. MR. HALL'S HOUSE/KITCHEN BACK DOOR - NIGHT

Mr. Hall opens the door.

Looks down.

Eyes widen.

95 INT. STAGE/STAGE WINGS - DAY

On stage, Kenzie and the MOUSE KING perform the Battle Scene in full costume. Bean runs on stage for her cue.

MISS MIYAKO (V.O.)

(over speakers)

Cmon' Dancers! Dress rehearsal! Do it like the real thing! Leave it all on the stage!

Mr. Constantine watches the performance from the wings while Natalie paces behind him.

MR. CONSTANTINE

NO! You are a MOUSE! I don't see a mouse. I see a little girl prancing like a bullshit princess! I want to see you scurry!

Natalie walks over to Fritz huddled by the prop shelf next to the wing, back turned.

NATALIE

Is it almost ready?

FRITZ
Quiet, devil!

Natalie exits with a toss of her hands up in the air.

PARTY BOY
What are you doing, freak?

FRITZ
Just saving the world! What are you
doing? Wasting your childhood
making fart sounds?

The PARTY BOY farts on Fritz and The PARTY CHILDREN run off laughing. Fritz watches them and sighs.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
(Romanian)
I wish I had a friend.

The lights flicker. A Smokey Dancer passes behind Fritz and the Nutcracker Doll on the prop table seems to blink.

MR. CONSTANTINE
(to the stage)
Kenzie! You're killing me! KILLING
ME! He has seven heads! When was
the last time you saw a mouse with
seven heads? You would SHIT
yourself!

96 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - DAY

Natalie takes a seat in the audience next to Bean.

Jasmine and Grayson in costume are performing the Pas de Deux. Mr. Constantine watches from the foot of the stage.

As Pas de Deux finishes, Mr. Constantine jumps on the stage.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Dancers! I wanted to make a quick
announcement that's relevant if we
manage to prevent the apocalypse.
Miss Jasmine Kearn has been
accepted as an apprentice for next
seasons' Royal Ballet.

Natalie's jaw drops. DANCERS cheer and give Jasmine a hug as she smiles like a beauty queen.

Natalie watches- stiff, heart pounding, and longing. Jasmine seems to move in slow motion.

Mrs. Primavera appears on stage to give Jasmine a long hug. Natalie's eyes well up, unblinking.

BEAN

You okay? Your eyes are leaking.

NATALIE

I'm watching all my dreams come true happening to someone else.

Jasmine is wiping away happy tears, her arm hooked around Mrs. Primavera.

Fritz pops his head from the wings, waving Natalie over.

Natalie walks toward the stage where Fritz is waiting for her. Mr. Constantine takes notice.

MR. CONSTANTINE

Yes, uh- okay, everyone keep congratulating Jasmine.

Mr. Constantine chases Natalie as she meets Fritz.

97

INT. STAGE WINGS - CONTINUOUS

NATALIE/MR. CONSTANTINE

Is it ready?

Fritz reveals the Snow Globe with jagged pieces glued together. The forest inside wilted. Natalie takes it.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

That's it? You GLUED it? Is this thing going to work?

Fritz cranks the knob and it plays the haunting Pas de Deux.

FRITZ

Works perfectly.

Kenzie spots the commotion and rushes over.

KENZIE

Oh my God, is this it?

MR. CONSTANTINE

Are you ready?

NATALIE

Yes, I can't be Ava anymore. I've already messed up her life enough.

FRITZ
And you released the wraiths.

KENZIE
I'm sorry, did you say wraiths?

Natalie hears squeals coming from the stage and glances over to see Mrs. Primavera giving Jasmine a hug.

JASMINE
I couldn't have done it without you, Mrs. Primavera.

MRS. PRIMAVERA
This is my happy place being with all you talented girls.

Natalie swallows and shakes the snow globe, her eyes well up. The globe glows green.

FRITZ
It's working!

NATALIE
I wish I was Natalie Primavera.

The globe illuminates to a blinding green. Suddenly, the glow fizzles and burns out like a bulb.

Silence.

KENZIE
Did it work? ...What's something only Ava would know?

BEAN
(to Natalie)
Is a hotdog a sandwich?!

Natalie rushes to the dressing room-

98 INT. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Natalie looks at the mirror- sees Ava's reflection. Mr. Constantine, Bean, Kenzie, and Fritz follow her in.

NATALIE
It didn't work.

MR. CONSTANTINE
(to Fritz)
What did you do wrong?

FRITZ
Nothing! Look at it! It's better
than ever!

The sad glued-together snow globe springs a leak.

Unnoticed by the bickering group, Jasmine pops in and quickly hides away listening.

KENZIE
What does this mean?! Ava's gone?

BEAN
I want my sister back! I wish I was
older so somebody would listen to
me already!

The lights flicker and a Smokey Dancer WHOOSHES by.

Natalie slumps down by herself as the group argues. Mr. Constantine puts his hand on Natalie's shoulder.

MR. CONSTANTINE
It was worth a try, yes?
(composes himself)
Everyone upstairs. Let's make it a
great Nutcracker, what do you say?

The group filters out, leaving Natalie alone.

99 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Everyone is gone. The stage is lit with a ghost light.
Natalie steps out onto the stage and hums the Pas de Deux.

A noise- Natalie pauses and looks into the dark audience.
Jasmine steps toward the stage.

JASMINE
Natalie and I used to do this:
dance the whole show the night
before opening night. Sneak out.
Dance until two A.M.

Jasmine starts stepping through the dance with her.

JASMINE (CONT'D)
We've always been neck-and-neck. I
landed my double pirouette, and she
landed a triple. She did twelve
fouettes in a row, and then I did
sixteen like the next day.

Jasmine begins doing fouette turns and Natalie joins her. They watch one another- turning and turning, until Jasmine finally stops. Natalie stops.

NATALIE

Why didn't you audition for the Sugar Plum Fairy if you wanted it?

JASMINE

Because it might have gone to me and I didn't want to break my best friend's heart.

NATALIE

If she's your best friend why do you call her Natalie Prima Donna?

JASMINE

(shrugs)

...We all talk too much shit sometimes.

NATALIE

Why haven't you gone to visit her?

JASMINE

I have. I've just always waited for her dad to be gone. I don't know what to say to him.

Natalie is quiet- Does she know?

NATALIE

You dance this role- perfectly.

JASMINE

I'm glad you got to see it. Cause I think I hurt my toe.

NATALIE

Your toe?

JASMINE

(smiles)

Yeah. It hurts. I can't handle two roles. So I'm just gonna dance the Snow Queen. I already left Mr. Constantine a message.

Jasmine begins walking off.

NATALIE

Wait! Why?

JASMINE
Is your bun too tight? Because
you're the understudy.

Natalie watches Jasmine disappear and she smiles.

100 INT. MR. HALL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Hall attempts to give CATASTROPHE, a zombie cat, a saucer of milk. Catastrophe growls, one eye missing and sores oozing from its skin.

ALL the other cats are huddled away, backs arched, hissing.

MR. HALL

Now now, Friends. Get along. We're
all friends. We're all friends.

Catastrophe bites a bit of Mr. Hall's fingertip.

MR. HALL (CONT'D)

Ow! Oh. Is that what you need,
friend? Here. Just a little, okay?

101 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Natalie wakes up. The wall calendar reads, OPENING NIGHT.

Natalie sighs and exits the room.

Bean stirs and uncovers herself. She's a GROWN TEENAGER. She gets out of bed, nine year old PJs barely fitting her.

Bean looks down and notices ample breasts in her PJ shirt that now fits like a crop top.

102 INT. AVA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Natalie eats Fruit Loops while Ms. Ross drinks coffee.

A SQUEAL comes from the other room. Natalie stands up.

NATALIE
Let me check on her.

103 INT. AVA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Natalie rushes into the room. TEENAGE BEAN stands there.

NATALIE
Oh my God.

TEENAGE BEAN
My wish came true! I look so hot!

NATALIE
Bean?

A knock on the door.

MS. ROSS (O.S.)
You girls okay?

NATALIE
Everything's fine!
(to Bean)
This is really bad.

104 EXT. THEATRE - SUNSET

The Blue Moon is high in the sky.

A marquee sign reads, "WILBURN ARTS HS THE NUTCRACKER. OPENING NIGHT. DEC. 15th." with a poster of the Nutcracker with Ava's body as the Sugar Plum Fairy by the door.

A LIMO pulls up and we see fancy black shoes walk back to open the rear door. Red Converse sneakers step out.

105 INT. STAGE WINGS - NIGHT

Natalie and Teenage Bean rush to Mr. Constantine.

MR. CONSTANTINE
What is it?

NATALIE
This is Bean. She made a wish to be a teenager and well-

MR. CONSTANTINE
This is bad. Very, very bad.

NATALIE
What does this mean?

MR. CONSTANTINE
It means that full worldly chaos is just around the corner. Every wish and whim for lost love, lottery tickets, anything can come true.
(MORE)

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
 (shouting to the back)
 Fritz! You'll be dancing with your
 iron sword tonight! We may have to
 kill something!

Party Boy halts and looks at Mr. Constantine.

PARTY BOY
 Did you mean to say that in
 Romanian, Mr. Constantine?

106 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The orchestra warms up as the audience trickle to take their seats. Trevor looks a mess, tie on sloppy and hair unbrushed.

Mr. Hall shows up, dazed with part of his cheek nibbled off. Principal Waters takes notice.

PRINCIPAL WATERS
 Mr. Hall, are you all right?!

MR. HALL
 He's gone. I opened the door and he
 left me. My friend is gone.

PRINCIPAL WATERS
 (under his breath)
 He is a brittle man.

Mr. Hall still muttering walks to his seat, climbing past Ms. Ross settled in her seat with grocery store flowers in hand.

Mr. and Mrs. Primavera enter, pushing Ava in a wheelchair down the aisle. She is given a standing ovation as they make their way to park Ava up front.

107 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Backstage is chaos of DANCERS in costume- most of them warming up, CHILDREN laughing and chasing each other. Fritz, swinging his sword.

MR. CONSTANTINE
 Places!

108 INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Jasmine is in her Snow Queen costume and wearing warm up booties. Zoe as a Snowflake is on her phone. Natalie walks in with Teenage Bean and catches Jasmine's eye. Jasmine smiles.

Mrs. Primavera scurries in to approach Teenage Bean.

MRS. PRIMAVERA
Baby mouse, huh?

Teenage Bean nods.

MRS. PRIMAVERA (CONT'D)
What happened to Bean?

TEENAGE BEAN
I'm not allowed to talk about that.

MRS. PRIMAVERA
Okay.

Mrs. Primavera starts ripping fabric.

109 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Mr. Constantine walks out on stage. The full house claps.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Greetings, parents, family, friends
of Wilburn Arts High School's
Christmas Ballet. The Nutcracker! I
won't make a lengthy speech, but I
want you all to think about this
past year and all you have lost and
what you may lose this coming year.
Christmas is the saddest season of
them all. I have never felt more
heartbroken than I do now.

Trevor's chin trembles and he claps enthusiastically. The rest of the audience is silent.

The lights flicker.

MR. CONSTANTINE (CONT'D)
Without further ado.

Mr. Constantine motions to the orchestra as he exits. They begin. The curtains open. The Street Scene Begins.

110 INT. STAGE WINGS - NIGHT

Miss Miyako half jogging, hand on her earpiece.

MISS MIYAKO
Do we have any idea where the doll
is? We need it now.

At Miss Miyako's feet is Catastrophe, crawling, unnoticed.

111 INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Teenage Bean is in a makeshift Mouse costume. Mrs. Primavera puts on finishing touches.

MRS. PRIMAVERA

Okay, that should do.

TEENAGE BEAN

Is it hard to dance with big boobs?

NATALIE

No talking, remember?

MRS. PRIMAVERA

Ava, that's rude.

TEENAGE BEAN

Yeah. AVA. People want to listen to what I have to say. I'm grown up. Who knows? Maybe I'll move out.

NATALIE

Bean! I mean, Bean's replacement!

MRS. PRIMAVERA

Being young only happens once.
Enjoy it.

BEAN

There's nothing good about being a kid or teenager. Whatever I am.

MRS. PRIMAVERA

It's funny how we spend our whole childhood looking ahead and our entire adulthood looking back.

An USHER enters with a large bouquet of flowers.

USHER

Is Zoe here?

Zoe, at her makeup station waves her hand and the Usher puts Zoe's flowers down. Zoe looks at the card. It reads: Merde, Zoe. Can't wait to meet you. Love, Ansel.

ZOE

Is this a joke?!

(shrieks)

Is this a fricken joke?!

112 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The Party Scene March is happening.

Zoe's faint scream echoes through the auditorium. The dancers all look off stage, but continue.

113 INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Miss Lana sees the Nutcracker doll standing in a walking pose near the exit door and snatches it.

MISS LANA
(hand to earpiece)
Found it! Must have been some kid.

Miss Miyako meets Miss Lana with a box and they stick the Nutcracker inside, it blinks once before the lid covers it.

Mr. Constantine with an eye patch dressed as DROSSELMEYER, rushes by and grabs the box.

114 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Party Scene is on stage.

Mr. Constantine pulls the Nutcracker out of the box and hands it to Kenzie for her solo.

Kenzie begins her dance. She nails her jumps perfectly.

Ava is watching the dance from her wheelchair. She catches Kenzie's eye and flashes her a thumbs up. Kenzie smiles.

Kenzie is looking longingly at the Nutcracker doll. It blinks. Kenzie does a double take.

The NUTCRACKER is ALIVE. It spots Fritz on stage.

NUTCRACKER
Friend!

Nutcracker's mouth is chomping like he's trying to eat Kenzie. Kenzie SCREAMS.

FRITZ grabs the doll, smashes it into the stage. And takes his sword- striking it over and over and over again.

The Nutcracker is face up looking at FRITZ.

NUTCRACKER (CONT'D)
I'm. Your. Friend.

Fritz takes his sword and smashes its face.

The audience GASPS. Mr. Constantine pulls Fritz off by the collar of his Victorian shirt. Mr. Constantine wrestles with the Nutcracker doll wrapping it until it looks like a mummy and hands it to Kenzie, who is breathing heavily.

MR. CONSTANTINE
The show must go on!

Kenzie grabs it gingerly. She timidly continues to dance.

115 INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Mr. Constantine, Fritz, and Kenzie are rushing down the backstage hall together. Kenzie is shaken up.

NATALIE
What's going on?!

MR. CONSTANTINE
(to Fritz)
You made a wish?!

FRITZ
To have a friend! Everybody needs a friend!

KENZIE
Is it dead?! Please tell me it's dead. I'm not going back on stage with that thing.

Teenage Bean and the other MICE run past.

MISS LANA
Costume change, Kenzie. Quickly!

Kenzie is pulled into the dressing room by Miss Lana.

KENZIE
Please don't make me go back out there! Please don't make me!

116 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Teenage Bean is tripping over herself, a terrible dancer in her new body- her leaps are sloppy and barely make it off the ground. She trips and the other Mice fumble behind her.

TEENAGE BEAN
These boobs suck!

Ms. Ross frantically flips through the program.

MS. ROSS
Bean?

On the stage, the grandfather clock SHATTERS and Kenzie has red ribbon/fake blood coming from her arms. She "falls asleep" on the couch.

The audience murmurs in shock.

117 INT. STAGE WINGS - NIGHT

Jasmine enters the wings in her Snow Queen costume.

Catastrophe is at her ankles and wanders onto the stage.

118 INT. ON STAGE/AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Battle scene with Toy Soldiers and the MOUSE KING is on stage. Kenzie sees Catastrophe and SCREAMS. Mr. Constantine in the wings gives her a thumbs up.

Kenzie throws her shoe, hitting Catastrophe in the face and its other eyeball pops out.

Kenzie faints and hits the stage floor HARD.

Ava and the audience gasp.

MR. HALL
It's Catastrophe!

119 INT. STAGE/STAGE WINGS - NIGHT

The curtain closes.

Mr. Constantine rushes on stage and grabs the zombie cat.

120 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The curtain opens and it's the snow scene. Jasmine is on stage along with Zoe as one of the snowflakes.

Zoe spots Ansel Elgort in the Audience and gasps.

Ansel Elgort blows a kiss to Zoe and she catches the "kiss." Jasmine is in mid-lift, looking down at Zoe-

JASMINE
(pst!)
Cut it out!

Zoe excitedly jumps up and down as the other Snowflakes continue dancing around her.

121 INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

MR. CONSTANTINE
Intermission! Costume changes! Get ready, dancers!

Mr. Constantine has the zombie cat in his hand.

Natalie, hair and makeup done, but not yet in costume, sees the cat and gasps.

NATALIE
What is that?

KENZIE
Oh my God! Catastrophe!

Catastrophe growls and chomps the air towards the dancers. Grayson comes out of his dressing room and pauses.

GRAYSON
Mr. Constantine, I think your cat is sick.

Mr. Hall wanders back stage. Mr. Constantine covers the cat up with his cape.

MR. HALL
Have you seen Catastrophe?

Fritz points to Mr. Hall with his sword-

FRITZ
Infiltrator!

NATALIE
Mr. Hall! Let's get you a drink.

Natalie grabs Mr. Hall by the arm.

122 INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

A DRINK STATION is set up with a long line. Natalie tows Mr. Hall straight to the BARTENDER, cutting off Ansel Elgort.

NATALIE
Excuse me, can you give him some
alcohol?

Bartender pours a glass of white wine.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Don't you have anything stronger?

BARTENDER
We're at a high school production.
What do you expect?

Mr. Hall takes the glass of wine.

MR. HALL
I'm seeing Catastrophe everywhere.
I really miss him.

NATALIE
He is kind of everywhere, Mr. Hall.
Atoms never die, remember? They
just change into something new.

MR. HALL
That's right. You've always been a
great student, Ava.

NATALIE
I have?
(beat)
I'm gonna follow you on Instagram
after graduation.

MR. HALL
Oh, no. I'm not the Instagram type.

NATALIE
Hashtag cats of Instagram? You'd
take to Instagram like a free
radical takes to an electron.

Mr. Hall laughs- for the first time.

123 INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Mr. Constantine wrestles with Catastrophe in his hands. He's surrounded by scared DANCERS cheering him on. Finally, Mr. Constantine tosses the cat in a supply closet.

MR. CONSTANTINE
The show must go on!

124 INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Natalie, costume on, applies makeup at her station.

Ansel enters and gives Zoe a romantic kiss.

MISS MIYAKO
No audience members allowed here!

ANSEL
You can't stop me. No one can stop
a man in love. This is
exhilarating. I feel like I'm under
a spell!
(to Zoe)
Are you 18? Do you want to get
married? Have my children?

ZOE
Yes! Yes! YES!

Ansel slips a ring on Zoe and she lets out a silent scream.

NATALIE
Wait! Fifty thousand followers,
marry Ansel, and die. That's what
you said Zoe.

ZOE
Stalker much?
(to Ansel)
She's totally obsessed with me.

ANSEL
You can't have her!

Ansel gives Zoe another romantic kiss. Zoe pulls away.

ZOE
Is it just me or am I making out
with Ansel Elgort? Like, is this
real? I just can't even. This is
amazeballs. Literally all my dreams
are coming true.

A tiny sword misses Zoe's head. The Nutcracker Doll charges
into the dressing room.

Mr. Constantine enters, snatches the doll- through the open
door children are running and crying.

MR. CONSTANTINE
Five minutes.

Natalie looks up and nods.

Mrs. Primavera enters, swiftly pulling Natalie up to stand.

MRS. PRIMAVERA
Let's give you one last look over.

Natalie watches Mrs. Primavera as she inspects the costume, noticing her mother's hands trembling and dark circles under her bloodshot eyes.

MRS. PRIMAVERA (CONT'D)
Your mother here? She must be so
proud of you.

NATALIE
Yeah. She's here.
(beat)
I'm sorry about Natalie. And that
she can't dance anymore.

Mrs. Primavera is silent.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I mean, that's why you spend your
time with dancers, right? This is
your happy place.

MRS. PRIMAVERA
More like my hiding place.

NATALIE
...Why would you hide?

MRS. PRIMAVERA
You hear a five year old say they
want to be a ballerina and you
expect it to change. But not
Natalie, she had a dream and
nothing could stop her. She makes
the impossible possible.

NATALIE
She can't be a ballerina though.

MRS. PRIMAVERA
Nobody is a ballerina forever.
After her first show, I called her
a star. Got her-

NATALIE
A dog.

MRS. PRIMAVERA

Yeah, Cliche. And the rest is history. She loved to dance and I kept feeding it. Moving to the next level, getting her pointe shoes, the next role, Royal ballet. I should have fed other things, but I was happy she found something she loved. I just had no idea it would hold her prisoner. I love her for a million reasons and ballet is only one of those. I'm not sure I've ever told her that.

NATALIE

That's why you haven't been around the hospital?

MRS. PRIMAVERA

I want to make everything okay and I can't. How can I tell my daughter the only thing she loves in life she can't do anymore?

NATALIE

I think you say to her what you just said to me.

Natalie smiles as Mrs. Primavera pins a tiara around her bun.

MRS. PRIMAVERA

I got Natalie a Nutcracker Doll for Christmas this year. Do you think that's a stupid gift?

NATALIE

Clara's love brought the Nutcracker to life after he was broken. It's the perfect gift for Natalie.

Natalie wraps her arms around her mother. Mrs. Primavera reciprocates the hug.

125 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Natalie sneaks over and grabs Ava's wheelchair, wheeling her around the side.

AVA

Hey! What are you doing?

126 INT. STAGE/STAGE WINGS - NIGHT

Russian duet is finishing up on stage with Mr. Constantine watching from the wings.

Natalie rolls Ava up to Mr. Constantine.

NATALIE
Mr. Constantine! Where's the globe?

MR. CONSTANTINE
(In Romanian)
Fritz! The Globe!

NATALIE
I know why the magic didn't work.
Like in chemistry, an antioxidant
can't shed an electron just cause-

AVA
Right! It needs a willing
participant- like a free radical!

MR. CONSTANTINE
Ladies! You lost me at chemistry.

NATALIE
It wasn't enough for me to not want
to be Ava anymore, I have to want
to be Natalie. Broken body and all.

Fritz appears with the sad Snow Globe and Natalie takes it.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I wish I was-

AVA
But your dance! You're up next!

Brock and Theo finish onstage. Audience claps.

NATALIE
It's not my role. It's yours.

Natalie shakes the Snow Globe and it glows bright green.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I wish I was Natalie Primavera.

The orchestra starts the music for the Pas de Deux.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Why aren't we switching back?

Mr. Constantine looks around. The walls RUMBLE. The snow machine rattles to a start. Lights flicker. Mr. Constantine smiles as the faintly falling snowflakes dust the stage.

MR. CONSTANTINE
The globe is weak, but it's
working. Looks like you have time
for one more dance.

Natalie looks to Ava and she nods in agreement.

Natalie turns to the stage and sees Grayson on the other side, he throws his hands out as to say, "WTF, are we doing this?" Natalie takes a deep breath and nods.

Mr. Constantine takes the Snow Globe from Natalie.

NATALIE
God, I'm going to miss this.
(beat)
I really do love to dance.

MR. CONSTANTINE
I know, Miss Primavera.

NATALIE
This song is so-

MR. CONSTANTINE
Beautiful.

NATALIE
Heartbreaking.

The music swells. Natalie takes a step onto the stage.

127 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Kenzie sits on her throne next to the NUTCRACKER PRINCE.

Natalie and Grayson meet center stage and begin the Pas de Deux as the orchestra swells.

Trevor plays viola with the pit orchestra, his lip trembles as he watches Natalie and Grayson on stage. The dancers' eyes are locked on each other like there's no one else as they dance- skillful and emotional.

Ms. Ross eyes glisten wide with wonder watching Natalie for the first time and leans forward in her seat.

128 INT. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Zoe and Ansel are lost in a messy make-out session. The Nutcracker Doll army-crawls toward them. A light is hanging precariously over Zoe's head and a curling iron is causing a rack of tutus to smoke.

RUMBLE. The room blackouts for a moment. The hanging light crashes into a rack of tutus to fall away from the iron. The Nutcracker Doll goes limp.

129 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The two Smokey Dancers enter from the back of the auditorium and dance their way down the aisle toward the stage. They are invisible to all but Natalie and Mr. Constantine.

130 INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Teenage Bean, Fritz, and the Children are huddled as Catastrophe breaks through the closet door little by little a la The Shining. Fritz clenches his sword.

Catastrophe fully breaks through the door and charges toward the Children. Fritz raises his sword just as- FLICKER- the cat goes limp- dead. The Children CHEER! Fritz turns to high five Bean, who is now swimming in her costume.

BEAN

I'm a kid again! No more boobs!

Bean hugs Fritz. Fritz beams.

131 INT. STAGE/STAGE WINGS - CONTINUOUS

The Smokey Dancers join Natalie and Grayson on stage, shadowing their dance, drawing ever closer.

Miss Lana and Miss Miyako watch the duet- eyes fixed and in awe, clutching each other's hands.

Grayson smiles at Natalie and the two kiss as though there was no audience.

Trevor lets out an audible sob.

With the final lift as the song's crescendo peaks, the Smokey Dancers enter Natalie and exit right before Ava's body drops into the final partner pose, leaving behind Natalie's "spirit" with a puff.

132 INT. STAGE/STAGE WINGS - CONTINUOUS

Natalie's "spirit" quickly absorbs into her own body- eyes bulge as she sits up in her wheelchair with a gasp.

133 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The audience erupts in applause. Grayson lets Ava down and she gives a bewildered curtsy.

134 INT. STAGE/STAGE WINGS - NIGHT

Mr. Constantine has the snow globe. Both dark Dancers are back inside. Frozen.

Ava runs off stage and gives Natalie a large hug.

AVA
What are you going to do now?

NATALIE
(smiles)
No idea. Look for my second dream.

MR. CONSTANTINE
(snapping his fingers)
Enough! Solo. Now!

AVA
What?! Nonono. I can't!

NATALIE
Ava, you're the understudy. This is
how it was always supposed to be.

135 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Ava steps out. Begins her solo. Her lips tight with concentration. She begins with her fouettes- she's nailing them. Her smile spreads slowly and then wide with glee as the audience claps.

Ava freezes as she spots Trevor in the orchestra pit.

AVA
Trevor?

TREVOR
Ava?

AVA
I love you!

TREVOR
I love you!

Ava leaps off the stage into the orchestra pit. The audience and Ms. Ross gasps. Ava and Trevor kiss.

136 INT. STAGE/STAGE WINGS - NIGHT

Grayson watches the scene, confused. Miss Miyako and Miss Lana shake their heads.

MISS MIYAKO
Worst Nutcracker ever.

MISS LANA
Next year will be better when Mr. Too-Sexy-To-Teach isn't here anymore. All semester I just like 'just shut up and kiss me already.'

MISS MIYAKO
What? No.

Mr. Constantine walks up, throwing his arms around Miss Miyako and Miss Lana's shoulders.

MR. CONSTANTINE
This is beautiful. How erotic! And destructive!

A few feet away, Natalie tugs on Grayson's shirt.

GRAYSON
Oh, hey! How are you doing? Is that stupid to ask? You look good.

NATALIE
Good. A little. And thanks.
(beat)
So, I was wondering if you wanted to grab coffee or whatever?

GRAYSON
Or whatever?

NATALIE
Whatever will get you to hang out with me.

Grayson gives her a curious look. He glances back at Ava one more time before turning back to Natalie and smiles.

GRAYSON
Yeah, definitely.

137 INT. STAGE/AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The Finale. The whole cast dips into a final bow and Kenzie poses with the broken Nutcracker doll with a large smile.

Mr. Constantine steps out and plunges into a dramatic bow.

No claps. A cough.

Trevor sets down his viola and claps enthusiastically.

Ansel is walking away down the center aisle. A moment later we see Zoe, tear streaked, chasing him.

ZOE
Ansel! I love you! Don't unfollow
me!

138 INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY ROOM - MORNING

Natalie is looking at Ava's Instagram page. A picture of Ava, Ms. Ross, Bean and Trevor around a Christmas Tree. Captioned: "Christmas is the Season of Magic." Natalie hearts the post.

Natalie pops in earbuds. Her eyes close and her head sways slightly with the music.

Grayson enters, knocks on the door with a Christmas present.

Mrs. Primavera smiles and waves Grayson in as Mr. Primavera is sips his coffee, reading a paper.

GRAYSON
Merry Christmas.

Natalie lifts up on to the parallel bars from her wheelchair.

She takes a step.

The End.